Chronicles

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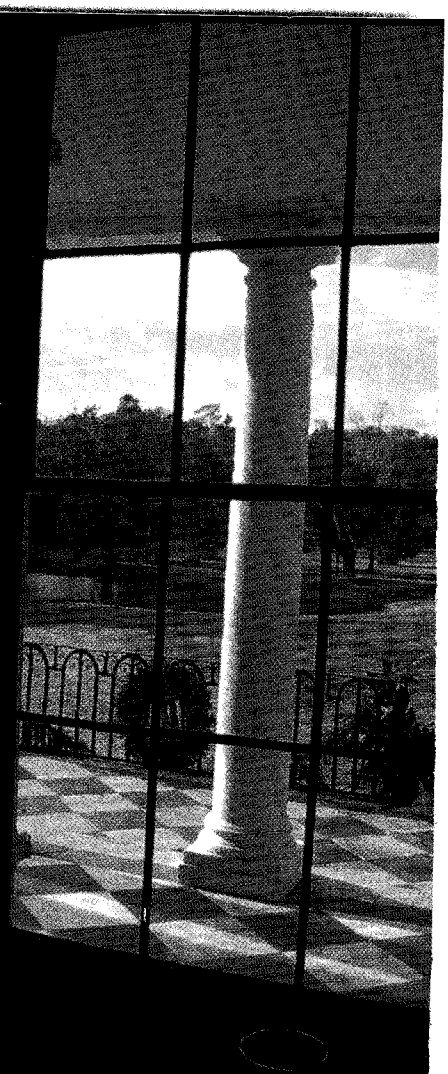

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Trashing the Trailer

I'm not certain that intellectual snobbery is not inconsistent with a Christian mind, but I've never been much bothered by the undercurrent of it that hums along noticeably in a lot of the articles in *Chronicles*. Forty years ago, when I, then a small childish high-school student in Houston, would take a packed, gloriously smoke-filled city bus to school in the mornings, at least half of the businessmen, attorneys, and secretary-receptionists aboard would be taken up with a paperback. They would be reading Austen, Shakespeare, Trollope, and others worthy of attention. In April or May 1968, enough Americans were still interested in genuine poetry that *Life* thought it worthwhile to print an article about which poets were supporting McCarthy and which were supporting Kennedy. I ache with nostalgia for a culture still so hardy. It's as gone as the *Titanic*, but *Chronicles* does its noble best to pick up the few gasping survivors like me.

But during my dozen years as a *Chronicles* subscriber, the April issue is the first I've read in which a truly mean assertion of class superiority has appeared. It is grotesque and does indeed clash with Christianity, as well as with *Chronicles*' telegraphed claim for itself as a tribune of the ordinary but honorable people who keep the country from metacollapse.

I'm referring to Chilton Williamson, Jr.'s disgusting statements ("Sam Francis's Mad Tea Party," *News*) that Sarah Palin "and her family are really only trailer trash from the trashiest state in the Union," and that Palin, "a blue-collar girl reared in Wasilla, is not prepared to govern anything more civilized than the state of Alaska." Maybe there was something contextual in the article that made the whole thing satirical and therefore a delight, but if so, I didn't get it. So it may be that Mr. Williamson, who has manifested himself as a buckaroo paleoconservative, is really a limousine paleoconservative when we're not looking.

I've never had it in for millionaires, even if they got their bundle from inheritance, and am filled with admiration if they got it in particularly clever, conniving ways. Although I've never been one, I knew many throughout my childhood and adolescence. Only a few were rich trash; most were aristocrats, authentic aristocrats. I discerned from their conduct that the real aristocracy is a quality of soul, and that whether they were Christians or not, they knew innately that the soul must be guarded. I've always felt that their money had little more to do with their graciousness than the color of their hair, and that the temptation to wealth or class snobbery would have repelled them.

As I finished the last paragraph it struck me that Mr. Williamson may be right about the trailer-trash thing after all—I remembered that one of the Palins' daughters got herself knocked up, something that, as far as I know, has never happened to a girl of what I can't not assume is Mr. Williamson's upper class. One of the few glowing aspects of our time is that such girls are so becomingly and appropriately represented by the excellent and virtuous Miss Paris Hilton, whose radiant gentility keeps many of us from caping ourselves with our Confederate battle flags and shotgunning our brains out. I suppose Miss Hilton's emblematic time has passed somewhat, but she will always make those of us who value the true lady sentimental and has a lasting place in that shrine which includes Lady Randolph Churchill and the duchess of Windsor.

And Mr. Williamson may be right about Mrs. Palin's unfitness to govern the country, too. It's true that she was unprepared for national consideration two years ago, and I'll grant that she may never rise to the philosopher-queen level. But for a

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A publication of The Rockford Institute. Editorial Office: 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.

Advertising Office: Burr Media Group LLC, P.O. Box 156, Vienna, VA 22183. Advertising e-mail: *RBurr@BurrMediaGroup.com.*
Advertising Phone: (703) 893-3632.

Subscription Department:
P.O. Box 0567, Selmer, TN 38375.
Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $44.99 (foreign subscriptions add $15 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 0567, Selmer, TN 38375.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
Vol. 34, No. 6 • June 2010
Printed in the United States of America

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roaming wilderness critter she does seem to have some interesting qualities. I can't know (but confess with shame that I wish I could), but I'd bet she doesn't have a body piercing or a tattoo. She may not be an intellectual, but she's bright and witty, a natural phrasemaker, and has a knack and a relish for political performance that no one in public life who is on the general side of *Chronicles* readers can begin to match. (The look she shot Tina Fey on *Saturday Night Live* is a classic.) My impression is that her instincts are terrific, that she has a readiness to learn, and that she has outstanding courage and an unshakable core.

I think Harry Truman, if he were as vigorous as he was when he served heroically in France, could never be a *Chronicles* reader, because he would be dead after a single day's exposure to contemporary American anticulture. During his political career he couldn't have known what everyone in the world but the villainous morons who are running the country now knows, that socialism doesn't work. He was so trashy he never even got to college and struggled economically much of his life. But he studied all of his life and was one of the last Democrats to show intermittent signs of sanity. And I think he would have taken instantly to Sarah Palin.

Truman would have spotted what Mr. Williamson misses, that Mrs. Palin is a born member of the non-upper-class, brilliant if largely self-taught and intuitive Americans guild, some of whose other members are Truman, Andrew Jackson, Stephen Foster, Herman Melville, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Thomas Edison, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Eugene O'Neill, Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, James Thurber, Harry Houdini, Orson Welles, Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, Frank Sinatra (who once said, "Don't ever tell anyone your dream, you'll only get it pissed on"), Frank Loesser, Ronald Reagan, unknown millions of remarkably inventive craftsmen and entrepreneurs, and John Dillinger, whose spectacular career I with the greatest reluctance mention last only because of its lamentable brevity.

But for me the argument for Mrs. Palin's trailer-trashiness buckles alarmingly if one considers that she seems to be a strong Christian and an obvious lady, and that she chose, when in middle age, to give birth to a Down-syndrome baby instead of doing the merciful thing that the civilized women of Mr. Williamson's class would probably have done—having him cut to pieces or scalded to death.

I'll admit that my lifelong deep revoltingness as a possible romantic figure to every girl or woman who has set her eyes upon me for a half-second may have contributed to my becoming an evangelical loony and studio-apartment trash, but between revenge fantasies I just can't shake the notion that America may be under divine judgment. I doubt that more than a half-decade will pass before homosexual "marriage" is the law of the land, and after that the only societal blasphemy America could commit that she hasn't yet is the open sacrificing of preschoolers by fire. So I don't expect we'll be blessed with a Palin presidency. It would be dissonant with the ascending series of curses I suspect God may have been hurling enthusiastically at us for the past half-century. But until America is on fire from sea to flaming sea, I'm sure I'll find Mr. Williamson's words to be a near-miraculously quick and thorough purgative if I feel I need one.

I mustn't be an ingrate. I did learn one fascinating thing from Mr. Williamson's article: that Alaska is the trashiest state in the Union. It had never occurred to me that in contemporary America it was possible to make such a determination.

—Bob Taylor
Mishawaka, IN

Mr. Williamson Replies:

I suppose snobbery is in the eye of the beholder and dependent upon whether one is used to drawing class distinctions, which I was brought up to do.

Sarah Palin is, simply and wholly, a media creation, first of John McCain's ludicrous presidential campaign of 2008, and subsequently of the media, which enjoys showing the American public how vulgar American "conservatism" really is, while scaring the leftist portion of it with thrilling hobgoblins like Mrs. Palin. But the point, it seems to me, is this: Societies are best governed from the top, to which Sarah Palin certainly does not belong. The role of an aristocracy, whether hereditary or of the talents, is to govern, having been trained up from childhood for that purpose. The paradox is that we have no aristocracy today but simply a collection of interpenetrating elites, a faux aristocracy united by their hatred of traditional society, reflecting their envy and resentment of the true aristocracy that governs such a society. It is not clear to me by any means that Mrs. Palin's political instincts, sympathies, and ideas really are the correct ones, but it should be obvious, in any case, that simply having the right ideas and favoring the right policies are not, in themselves, qualifications for high office. America's greatest presidents were the first four or five, chronologically speaking, to hold the office, all of them representatives of the country's upper class. They have been followed, mostly, by trash, some of it of the log-cabin variety, the log cabin having been the precursor of the mobile home, as David Hackett Fischer pointed out in a book of his. One of them even accused his successor of having a "bungalow mind."

Frederick the Great once remarked that his enlightened reign was owing entirely to a "happy accident"—that accident being himself. Should Sarah Palin ever become president, and a good one, that would be a still happier event, and an even more unlikely accident.

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Organs, but no Bach

Bobbing about in the eddies of "choice" as we proles of the "Inclusition" are wont to do, how bracing it was to read Christopher Sandford's piece on Stravinsky (*Vital Signs*, April)! Consider this quotation from the composer himself:

> The stained-glass artists of Chartres had few colors, and the stained-glass artists of today have hundreds of colors but no Chartres. Organs, too, have more stops now than ever before, but no Bach. Not enlarged resources, then, but men and what they "believe."

Today, we have more "resources" than ever before, yet, without some guiding sense of worth, these "choices" simply reinforce solipsism—as when we dutifully line up to participate in the Menshevik soap opera of national elections and then quack about our freedom and how wonderful it is simply to vote, regardless of whom or what we actually vote for. Whether in the arts, education, or society, we are meant to revel in the bountiful diversity of "choicemaking" without giving a hoot as to what it means; which, to comment on another excellent article in the April issue, does provide some insight into what Philip Jenkins refers to ("Well, Naturally, We're Gullible," *Breaking Glass*) when discussing the boring and omnipresent nature of "liberals" in the academy.

You see, the very puzzlement that one feels from, say, Titania Feebling's seminal "Gravity as Construct: Re-Imaging The Amorphous Blob as Aphrodite," or Prof. Max Abbruchkunst's "Klangfarbenmelodie for Three Coon Hounds and Fire Engine" is a litmus to indicate how close or far from enlightenment one is; this puzzlement is the very thing that validates this deep Rube Chomsky sense of choicemaking. Stravinsky's idea, which can be applied to all human endeavor, that "art begins when we decide what to leave out," is the polar opposite of this so-called liberal so-called thinking. Whoda thunk that the very measure of what makes liberals so much smarter is delineated by how aggressively the underlying principles of "The Emperor's New Clothes" are followed?

—Tom Sheeley
Flagpole, AZ

The Long View

The editors of *Chronicles* know that the battle for the soul of our civilization will rage until the end of time. You can help *Chronicles* stay in the fight for generations to come by making a gift to the endowment of The Rockford Institute, publisher of *Chronicles*. The Institute is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, and gifts to the Institute are tax-deductible to the limit of the law. Your gift can take the form of:

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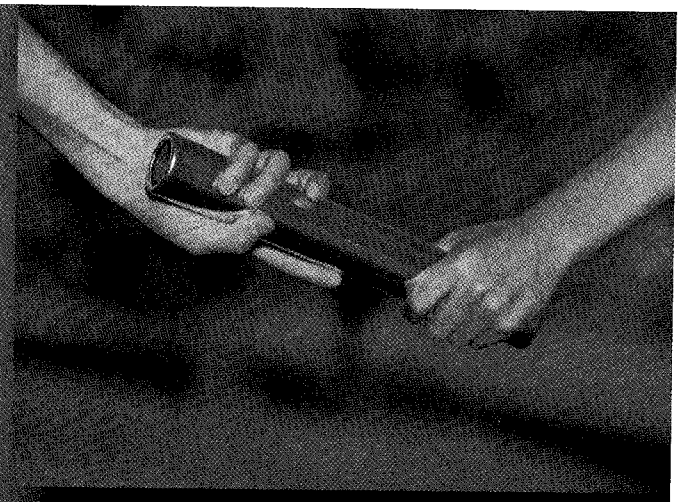

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Failure on Many Levels

by William J. Quirk

GOLDMAN SACHS buys and sells securities for customers and also trades for its own book. It's the world's biggest derivatives dealer. CEO Lloyd Blankfein told a British magazine in late 2009 that they were "doing God's work." Now we know what that entails.

At an April 27 Senate subcommittee hearing, Carl Levin (D-MI) quoted from Goldman e-mails that referred to securities they were selling to clients as "junk" or "crappy" or "sh-tty." Senator Levin added, "You are betting against the same security you're out selling." On April 16, the SEC sued Goldman Sachs for civil fraud. Could cheating be a major profit center for Goldman? The SEC alleges that one client paid Goldman $15 million to be allowed to design a security to fail—which Goldman then sold to other Goldman clients without disclosing that the security had been designed to fail. Within a year the security performed as it was designed: The first client made one billion dollars, and the others lost the same amount. The major loser was Royal Bank of Scotland, which led British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to call Goldman "morally bankrupt."

The SEC lawsuit also introduced the general public to something called a synthetic collateralized debt obligation (CDO). The mechanical details were astonishing; the outline of the deal took 65 pages. Before you can have a "synthetic" CDO, you have to have an actual CDO. What's that? First, a poor credit risk takes out a mortgage he can't pay. Second, thousands of such mortgages are collected into a security—a mortgage-backed bond. Third, those bonds are collected into another security called a collateralized debt obligation. Then the CDOs are sold to investors.

A "synthetic" CDO refers to an actual CDO but doesn't own any asset—it is a bet. Like any bet it requires two sides: a "long," who is betting housing will go up; and a "short," who is betting housing will go down. The short bettor, by means of a credit default swap, agrees to pay the interest payable on the referenced CDOs to the long bettor. In return, the long agrees to pay the principal of the referenced CDOs if they default. Goldman is the bookie who puts the bet together. Rube Goldberg would have blanched at such a grotesque construction.

Winning or losing the bet depends on the quality of the CDOs that are referenced. Amazingly, Wall Street had no consistent practice to outline how the bookie was to select the CDOs and what duty, if any, the bookie owed to the bettors.

The SEC complaint states that IKB, a German commercial bank, told Goldman in late 2006

> that it was no longer comfortable investing in the liabilities of CDOs that did not utilize a collateral manager, meaning an independent third-party with knowledge of the U.S. housing market and expertise in analyzing RMBS.

Goldman, in marketing ABACUS 2007-ACI, represented that the "reference portfolio" was "selected by ACA Management LLC . . . , a third-party with experience analyzing credit risk in RMBS." Fabrice Tourre, a junior employee charged by the SEC along with Goldman, e-mailed: "One thing that we need to make sure ACA understands is that we want their name on this transaction. . . . this will be important that we can use ACA's branding to help distribute" the securities.

Goldman did not disclose that it was paid $15 million by John Paulson's hedge fund, which wanted to "short" the housing market, to allow him to handpick reference CDOs for the synthetic CDO. The SEC concludes:

> In sum, GS&Co arranged a transaction at Paulson's request in which Paulson heavily influenced the selection of the portfolio to suit its economic interests, but failed to disclose to investors . . . Paulson's role in the portfolio selection process or its adverse economic interests.

The European banks who took the long bet, according to the *New York Times*, thought they were picking up a little revenue ($7 million) without any real risk, but ended up losing $841 million.

Goldman maintains it had no obligation to tell the long bettors that the short interest had selected the reference CDOs. It argues that the long bettors were "sophisticated investors" who should have done their own due diligence. Goldman may have a legal defense, but selling a security that is designed to fail is appalling. As simple wagers, the "synthetics" have no social utility.

Almost certainly, were Goldman to fail tomorrow, the government would label it "too big to fail" and bail it out. Why is the taxpayer guaranteeing the bets at a casino? "Can we reasonably continue with a financial system," Paul Volcker recently asked, "that, implicitly or explicitly, relies on a firmly held expectation that major financial institutions will be protected from failure in the face of financial crisis?" ◆

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Deo Vindice

No sooner did Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell issue his proclamation declaring April Confederate History Month than the ideological canister fire began.

The proclamation is "incendiary," huffed the *Washington Post*. "Obnoxious," sniffed historian James McPherson. "Mind-boggling," griped former governor Douglas Wilder, the grandson of slaves and the first black governor in America. And it was all for those ministers of Satan, the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Thus began the latest assault on Governor McDonnell, who last appeared in these pages when the kooky left, egged on by the *Washington Post*, zeroed in on McDonnell's thesis for a master's degree at Pat Robertson's Regent University. The thesis, it was said, was antihomosexual and antiwoman, and McDonnell quickly explained that his homophobic, misogynistic views had changed since he penned the offending words in 1989.

So with his proclamation to honor Virginia's storied past and such figures as Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jeb Stuart, the moonbats knew they had him again. Issued yearly until Democratic governors Tim Kaine and Mark Warner killed it, the proclamation is tame stuff. It merely recognizes a few simple truths, not least that Virginia's Confederate history helps pay the bills with tourist dollars. It said that we must "understand the sacrifices of the Confederate leaders, soldiers and citizens during the period of the Civil War, and . . . recognize how our history has led to our present." In addition, "[T]his defining chapter in Virginia's history should not be forgotten, but instead should be studied, understood and remembered by all Virginians, . . . in the context of the time in which it took place, but also in the context of the time in which we live."

The problem? The proclamation did not mention slavery. McDonnell, the left implied, had to be a crypto-racist, a neo-Confederate, and most likely one of the Boys from Brazil. With the left's guns firing on Richmond, the governor ran for cover, reprising his retreat during the Thesis Attack.

The scholars at the *Washington Post* editorial page unlimbered this salvo: "But any serious statement on the Confederacy and the Civil War would at least recognize the obvious fact—that slavery was the major cause of the war, and that the Confederacy fought largely in defense of what it called 'property,' which meant the right to own slaves."

The *Post* was also in a pother that the proclamation said Virginians "fought for their homes and communities." The paper sent an urgent message to James McPherson, the "dean of Civil War scholars," who pronounced himself aghast: "I find it obnoxious, but it's extremely typical. The people that emphasize Confederate heritage and the legacy, and the importance of understanding Confederate history, want to deny that Confederate history was ultimately bound up with slavery. But that was the principal reason for secession—that an anti-slavery party was elected to the White House. . . . And without secession, there wouldn't have been a war."

So nefarious was McDonnell's deed that the state NAACP convened an "emergency meeting" to discuss his record of racial perfidy. So said King Salim Khalfani, the Virginia NAACP's war chief.

No one really knows what the "emergency" was, but we do know this: Not all "serious" historians agree with the *Post* and Professor McPherson that "slavery was the major cause of the war."

No matter. Instead of fighting back, McDonnell ducked into the bushes and apologized: "The proclamation issued by this Office designating April as Confederate History Month contained a major omission. The failure to include any reference to slavery was a mistake, and for that I apologize to any fellow Virginian who has been offended or disappointed. The abomination of slavery divided our nation, deprived people of their God-given inalienable rights, and led to the Civil War. Slavery was an evil, vicious and inhumane practice which degraded human beings to property, and it has left a stain on the soul of this state and nation. In 2007, the Virginia General Assembly approved a formal statement of 'profound regret' for the Commonwealth's history of slavery, which was the right thing to do."

And that's only the first paragraph of McDonnell's meandering *mea culpa*. He then rewrote the proclamation to include a few words about the "peculiar institution."

Now, anyone who has read deeply about the War of Northern Aggression knows exactly what it was about, which isn't to say slavery played no role in antebellum po-

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litical battles, or that slavery did not play a role in the war. But it was not the main cause of the war; nor was it the principal reason the average Confederate or Union soldier took up arms. Even McPherson admits as much.

But you can't utter such truths in polite company, and in issuing the proclamation without a ritual denunciation of the obvious, McDonnell committed a mortal sin.

Slavery, of course, wasn't the real issue for the left. For 50 years, one of its major projects has been deconstructing American history by destroying traditional American symbols and replacing them. As real heroes and patriots such as George Washington and Robert E. Lee suffer a constant campaign of calumnies, dubious characters such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and César Chávez enjoy canonization.

The left has largely achieved its goal, thanks to conservative politicians who run from the sound of the guns.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

Silence the Opposition

The Socialist Greek government is crafting and carrying out policies that appear to have come straight from the Soviet playbook in efforts to repress the conservative opposition, which came out of last October's elections heavily wounded. Those who oppose Greece's immigration law, which grants citizenship to practically everyone (Al Qaeda has found a new gateway to Europe), are ending up in jail. The policemen who arrest them are promoted. Lately, the Socialist ministers have even taken to suppressing political activity on the internet.

Greece's Citizens' Protection Minister Michalis Chrysohoidis (he loves to apologize through letters to the *Wall Street Journal*) has talked about an unspecified (and nonexistent) "fascist threat," in an attempt to appease left-wing extremists while simultaneously intimidating patriots and nationalists. Even before the new immigration law was voted in by parliament, he tried hard to preempt a negative response. "Preventive" arrests were reported on a daily basis, while the left intensified its bombing campaign, which finally claimed the life of a 15-year-old Afghan boy and severely injured his mother and sister.

After the last bloody attack, authorities tried to create a diversion by leaking false information about an extreme right-wing organization's alleged involvement in the incident. A popular left-wing portal reproduced the claims. The statements were withdrawn after only a few hours, both because of their ridiculous claims and because of the reactions of police authorities, who refused to play along. They knew that such accusations wouldn't stop the bombing. And, finally, the left-wing perpetrators were arrested.

Greece is now trying to create a politically correct, multicultural, secular society. The model that has failed in Madrid, London, and Moscow is now being applied in Greece, the border between Europe and the Muslim Third World.

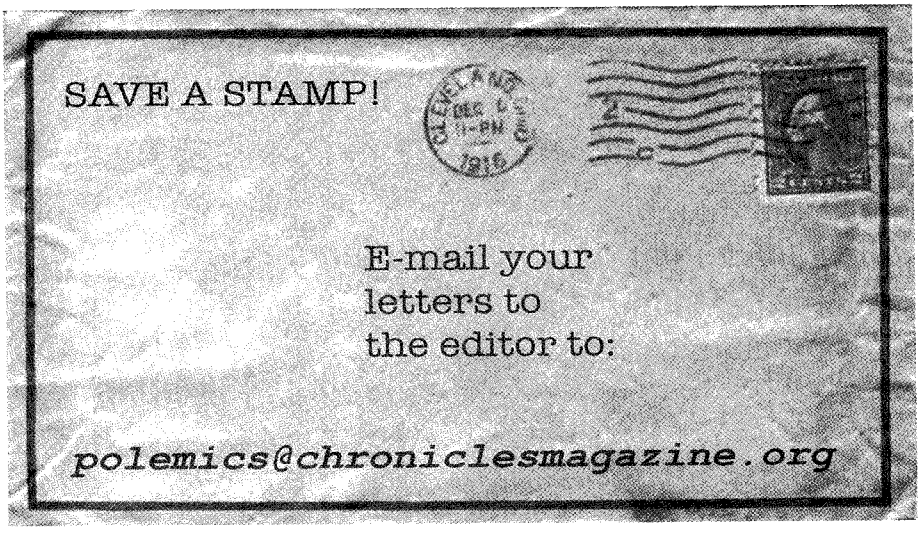
Ideological dogmatism has always been the religion of the Greek left, and it has already cost us a bloody civil war. That dogmatism is about to cause even greater troubles for the rest of Europe. The naturalization process that the Greek government initiated in its attempt to replace the voters that it is losing through its deeply unpopular policies will radically change the ethnic and social map of Greece. Meanwhile, a surge in immigrant crime and terrorist attacks is gravely affecting the average Greek citizen's quality of life.

—Nikos Hidiroglou

Obiter Dicta

Our poet this month is **David Middleton**. Dr. Middleton is the poet-in-residence at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. His books of verse include *Beyond the Chandeleurs* (1999) and *The Habitual Peacefulness of Gruchy* (2005), both from LSU Press. He was awarded the Allen Tate Prize in Poetry by the *Sewanee Review* in 2005 and the state of Louisiana's Governor's Arts Award as Outstanding Professional Artist for 2006.

The art on the cover and pages 12 and 15 is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr**. Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and their children.



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Cursing the Darkness

HER MOTHER SAID she had been brainwashed. Her daughter had never liked who she was and was always looking to become someone else. Mother is quick to reassure reporters she is not prejudiced: "I'm not against Muslims. I married one." Jihad Jamie, as the press has dubbed her, is only 31, but she has lived a troubled life, serving the needs of gangbangers and marrying, successively, three illegal Mexican immigrants who beat her. Jamie Paulin-Ramirez is now "married" a fourth time to Algerian jihadist Ali Sharaf Damache, whom she met on the worldwide web, an institution that has replaced church socials and singles bars as the place to find your partner for life or for the duration of erotic interest.

Jamie was recruited by another dumb-blonde jihadist, Colleen LaRose, who dubbed herself Jihad Jane. Miss LaRose, who also suffers from low self-esteem and bad judgment, made her first court appearance with her blond hair done up in corn rows. She has apparently concluded that if some African-Americans join the Nation of Islam, all she has to do to become a Muslim is to adopt an Afro hairstyle. After September 11 Miss LaRose is said to have cried death to all Muslims, though when she saw pictures of suffering Muslims on the web, she decided to devote her life to helping them—not, of course, by doing volunteer work in a Muslim nursing home, but by murdering a Swedish cartoonist who had blasphemed against a religion of which she was profoundly ignorant.

How did Jane and Jamie come to embrace Islam, a religion that should hold few attractions for women? In Jamie's case, her Muslim stepfather may have had something to do with legitimizing an alien religion. He converted to Islam 40 years ago, but disclaims any responsibility for her conversion, insisting she does not realize that Islam is a religion of peace. As he undoubtedly knows, Islam is a religion of war, and the prophet Muhammad practiced the violence he preached. Both girls are lost souls, victims of public education and the collapse of American society that has come about after two generations of socialism.

The problem is not Muslims *per se*, who persist in their strange religion by force of habit. Better by far to be a practicing Muslim than to become the secularized ex-Muslims that the State Department wishes to produce in the Middle East by exposing young Arabs to American fast food and fast sex. American pop culture and education have destroyed the character of our people, and they hope it will do the same to Muslims.

Jane and Jamie, alas, show us all too well the real result of Americanization—the same bewilderment and demoralization that leads young women to grasp at any straw, whether the straw is offered by Mexican gangbangers or Algerian jihadists. Most young American women are not converting to Islam, but how many of us, of either sex or any age, know who we are? We are now on the second or third generation of Americans who have been raised as laboratory rats for the great experiment in diversity.

Liberalism has triumphed. There is no American nation, no American people. There is only the false identity manufactured by the opinion factories. For the left, the old America was a concentration camp where blacks, Indians, women, and homosexuals were persecuted, while the America-to-come—always just a little beyond the horizon—is a Marxist paradise or multicultural university campus in which any human being's desires are satisfied regardless of the quality of those desires or his willingness to work for them.

We have become strangers in our own land. This experience is what intellectuals since Feuerbach have called "alienation." For Feuerbach, the culprit was the Christian God, through Whom man became estranged from his own nature; for Marx, it was capitalism that turned craftsmen into robots and alienated them from society; for Freud and his disciples, it was neurosis that alienated human beings from reality. Whatever its sources and history, the feeling of alienation has been described and analyzed countless times by counselors and novelists. In fiction, the alienated hero is the superior outsider, often Jewish or black, who sees through the shallowness and vanity of religion, class, tradition, and morality—inevitably "bourgeois morality."

Alienation afflicted Europe long before the term was coined. What was every intellectual movement since the Renaissance if not a revolution against the religion and morality, the political and social structure of ordinary people in everyday life? Inevitably, those who fell prey to the theories of Voltaire and Rousseau, Marx and his classical-liberal enemies, felt alienated from all those dreadful conventional people who "as in the days that were before

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the flood . . . were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark," or Newton discovered the laws of motion, Voltaire debunked religion, Locke debunked monarchy, Marx debunked capitalism, John Stuart Mill debunked society and tradition, and Freud debunked morality.

Well, they have won. They have completed their long march through the institutions, including for the most part the churches, and there is nothing left unsoiled by the revolution. Even traditional Catholics, when they wish to discredit abortion, now resort to the revolutionary language of human rights and civil disobedience, or, when they attack socialism, employ the arguments of atheist classical liberals, or, if they are opposing atheist classical liberals, fall back on the language of Marx. Now it is we who are strangers here in our own land, all of us old-fashioned Americans who do not hate our ancestors or our country's traditions.

We are not the first people to become strangers in their own land. Civilized Romans were still living in the aftermath of the barbarian takeover of Italy, Gaul, and Britain. In the first generation or two, there were still men who believed in the civilization into which they had been born, but Romans of succeeding generations would be scarcely distinguishable from their German conquerors. And they did not even have public schools or television!

The poor Romans, at least, did not lose their civilization without putting up a fight, nor, for the most part, did they voluntarily surrender their culture and their identity. There was no Goth movement in Italy, even when it was ruled by Ostrogothic kings. In fact civilized Romans in Italy and southern France preserved enough of their institutions—the Church, town life, marriage, civility—that within just a few centuries Europe was well on its way to the brilliant rebirth of civilization that took place between the Age of Charlemagne (about 800) and Dante some five centuries later.

Romanitas, as it had been known, was doomed to disappear from Gaul, though it was the language of the defeated Romans that produced the Romance dialect that evolved into French. South of the Loire River, it is true, some remnants of Roman civilization persisted, and, even at the time of the Crusades, the South of France was a more Roman, more Mediterranean place than the North, but for all real purposes the Gallo-Romans had long since ceased to exist.

Nonetheless, not all was lost. The Church replaced the empire as the guardian of civilization, and defenders of the Church—Saint Benedict, the Christian poet and bishop Venantius Fortunatus, Pope Gregory I—did not waste much time on the handwringing that American conservatives so much enjoy. Benedict was too busy founding monasteries, while Gregory was writing his invaluable books, taking care of the poor, fighting off the Lombards, and sending missionaries to convert our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Venantius, who had been educated in Ravenna (which had retained its Roman identity), went to Francia, where he became a bishop. The rest of his life was taken up with caring for his diocese, teaching the Franks how to lead Christian lives, and composing the poems that entered into the standard repertoire of Christian hymns. American conservatives are fond of comparing our current degraded condition with the later Roman Empire. They are quite wrong. Since my teen years, I have been acutely aware that we are living some time after the collapse of the civilization my grandparents knew. In some respects, of course, things are better today than they were in the last Dark Age. We are vastly more comfortable and live longer. We have fire departments and police protection (sort of), electricity and water, and an endless array of electronic toys to persuade us that everything is all right.

The poor Romans, at least, did not lose their civilization without putting up a fight.

In other more important respects, things are vastly worse. American barbarians are not, for the most part, Christian, nor are they sturdy and self-sufficient Goths. Most of our barbarians are not even invading aliens—they are our friends and neighbors, our own children, if we are not very careful. Daily life for some of us has become like something out of Don Siegel's masterpiece *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. We watch as one by one our people turn into subhuman things who twitter their lives away, expressing their nothingness to other nobodies.

There is as much work to do today as there was in the sixth and seventh centuries. Venantius Fortunatus and his friend Gregory of Tours had to deal with a more violent and more competent set of boors and louts than we have to face on the streets of Manhattan. If such men as they—or Gregory the Great or Saint Austin, whom Gregory sent to convert the English—could hear the boohooing of disgruntled conservatives, they would tell us their tales of civilized men who had the courage to challenge the barbarians and, against all odds, convert and civilize them. ◆

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George McCartney, Jr.

Immigration: A History Lesson

by John Willson

"The United States is a nation of immigrants" is a meaningless statement, but that is not to say that it has no meaning. It is one of the lead lines for the Democratic/liberal/progressive agenda, and has been ever since Israel Zangwill used the mythic term "melting pot" as the title of his thankfully forgotten play of 1908.

First, the United States is not, in any way but juridical, a nation. And second, at one time or another every country, nation or not, was made up of people who came there from someplace else. Having made those premises clear, let us move on to the real reasons the myths of the melting pot and the nation of immigrants are so useful (and necessary) to the agenda of the left. This requires a history lesson.

The period from about 1870 (as the Late Unpleasantness was ending) to 1914 (the beginning of the Great War) was arguably the period of the most concentrated and far-reaching change in all of human history. Manufacturing and finance moved decisively ahead of agriculture as the backbone of the economy in many regions. We "conquered" the limits of geography with bicycles, automobiles, trains, and airplanes—not to mention the telephone. We vanquished the very night with electricity (and therefore potentially eliminated thousands of years of darkness metaphors). In fact, it is not too much to say that we changed the fundamental relation of man to nature. We put everybody into government schools, moved from farms to cities by the millions, legislated the strong beginnings of the nanny state. By the time we went "Over There" in 1917 all these things and many others had reached so far as to touch even the Tennessee farm of Alvin York. Henry Adams wrote that a boy born in 1850 was born closer to the year zero than to the year 1900.

Immigration was the most significant of all the changes. Several tens of millions of (mostly) Europeans sailed to the United States, bringing to American cities a cacophony of languages not heard perhaps since the Tower of Babel. New York City, studying its foreign-born in 1910, discov-

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ered that it had more Irish than Dublin, more Germans than Hamburg, more Italians than Naples. Something like this happened in most cities, especially those in manufacturing areas.

We must also note that the immigrants did not come to Chicago from Rome, or to Detroit from Warsaw. They came from the Polish countryside, the Sicilian countryside, the Russian countryside, and they settled in cities. Many, maybe most, were Catholics or Jews. Just as American Protestants were moving from the farms and small towns to the cities, European peasants flocked from rural areas to the same cities. Did we expect them all to "melt" in the refiner's fire and amalgamate into a hardier and more durable alloy?

Here is "Willson's First Law of Immigration History": No immigrant ever came to this country for the purpose of giving up his culture. Sometimes one's historical imagination must get a little silly, or at least whimsical, to get at the truth. Imagine a Sicilian, waking up one morning in his little home on a hillside and saying to himself, "I'm tired of living in a patriarchal society. I'll move my family to America, where my wife and daughters can have more freedom." Or a Polish peasant who says to himself, "I'm sick to death of a long name with so many consonants. I'll go to America, where I can have some vowels." Or the Russian Jew who tells his wife that he is sick of the Mishnah and the Torah and wants to move to Indiana and become a Presbyterian. The journalist Teddy White's father did come to this country to break away from a thousand years of rabbinical tradition in his family and became a socialist lawyer, but his case is remarkable precisely because it was so unusual.

The Italian men to whom my grandfather taught citizenship lessons were not here for the purpose of ceasing to be Italian. They were not here to liberate their daughters but to work on the railroad and to get what they thought would be a better life. The *New York Times* noticed in 1910 that of the over one million Italians who had come to the city to work in transportation industries since 1900, about 42 percent had sailed back home as soon as they saved a little money. But most people of every race, religion, and nationality stayed and did not melt—at least, not for about 100 years.

My grandfather Willson's cousin Gertrude Willson taught in the New York City public schools from 1900 to 1936, and although she noted in her journals that most of the children of immigrants, especially the Jews, were dutiful students and well behaved, and that their parents wanted them to do well, she also noted that they had little interest in becoming Americanized. Their parents joined the scores of ethnic associations (Hibernian Society, Club Polski) that they organized to protect their cultural heritage. Catholics and Lutherans founded parochial school systems largely to protect their children from the Protestant government schools. One of the major issues in Cincinnati politics was the Continental Sunday—on the surface, the old establishment trying to prevent Germans and other immigrants from going to the parks on Sunday afternoons to drink beer and play music and picnic, but underneath, a much larger cultural tug of war. European-language newspapers abounded in almost all cities until well after World War II (just as today Spanish-language media run parallel to English almost all over the country).

The historian Richard Jensen barely survived a firestorm of professional criticism when he denied, in a little book on the history of Illinois, the efficacy of race, class, and sex as explanatory categories. He did not much like the older terms *liberal* and *conservative*, either. He insisted that one can understand Illinois (particularly in the years around the turn of the 20th century) much better by looking at "traditional," "modern," and "postmodern" sets of values. Immigrants were almost all traditional, which meant that they held rather fiercely to a patriarchal society that emphasized kin, church, and a communal way of dealing with most things that had to be taken care of outside the home. They also looked at their communities through their guts, as a matter of race or tribe, or what often was called ethnicity. This is what made them different from the "old stock" Americans and from one another. Jensen argues that their traditionalism explains most of why they did not easily melt or amalgamate, and also explains how and why they changed American political and cultural life rather than simply exchanged what they had for what they found here. (He best explains this in *Illinois: A History.*)

For example, immigrants changed the structure of American politics. They did not merge but *dealt* with one another. One of the reasons FDR's New Deal was so effective as a slogan was its visceral appeal to tribes who, by that time, were used to making deals. The new one promised to let them in at the national level just as they had already worked it out in the provinces and in the cities.

One city where they worked it out was the Big Apple, the great immigrant metropolis of the Western world, the city that invented a modern device—the political machine—to serve the needs of traditional peoples. Every city picked up on the machine, but it started in New York. George Washington Plunkitt was the great philosopher of Tammany Hall. Unlike all but a handful of machine politicians, he was willing to talk on the record to journalist William Riordan,

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and the result is a little book that may be as important to the 20th century as Machiavelli's *Prince* was to the 16th. On one level Plunkitt was the Yogi Berra of politics: "I seen my opportunities and I took 'em," "The Irish were born to rule," "This civil service law is the biggest fraud of the age," and "reformers is mornin' glories" (and many other one-liners) have made their way into our lexicon of political wisdom.

Plunkitt, like Yogi, was shrewd and knew his craft. He knew every technique to shake money out of party members and businessmen. There is no good record of how Thomas Edison electrified New York during Plunkitt's lifetime, but it simply could not have been done without Tammany, and without Edison providing "grease for the machine." Plunkitt knew how to organize voters ("Get a followin'," he said, "even if it's only one man, and then tell others they can join yer organization"), how to work patronage to maximum effect; he knew every detail of every neighborhood in his district and what its citizens needed.

If you read Plunkitt carefully, you will see that his arguments—quite passionate at times—in favor of "honest" graft, the primacy of parties and the spoils system, and patriotism as loyalty to one's neighborhood and party are all directed to his great dictum, "Study Human Nature and Act Accordin'." Plunkitt saw tribes whose driving force was loyalty and whose loyalty was based on family, religion, and the daily rhythms of the neighborhood. Basic economic needs often signaled the right times and places for party intervention into those rhythms, but money was just a tool, no more intrinsically important than other abstractions like class or sex. To be a "statesman," Plunkitt knew, you had to study what people wanted and what they needed, and get a "followin'." Then start making deals.

The "followin's" the machines understood the best were relatively new immigrants, whose views of the world were tribal and traditional. They looked for leadership, and they looked for help moving into a culture they did not understand, one that often seemed like it wanted to strip them of what was theirs. It did not matter which party did the job best, although usually it was the Democrats, who had less stake than the Republicans in building a national political economy. The Democrats, at least until Woodrow Wilson, tended still to be the party of states, localities, and "the people."

It became conventional wisdom about 50 years ago that Plunkitt's time had passed. Edwin O'Connor's novel *The Last Hurrah* (1956) gives a charming portrait of Frank Skeffington's last race for mayor of Boston. He loses to a benighted moderate progressive who spends money on television ads and poses in front of his fireplace with his wife, four children, and dog. Skeffington is a wonderful old rogue, an Irish dealmaker who doesn't like the Jews or the Italians very much but knows how to cut them their shares, and he goes to bed (without polls) on election night certain that he has won. His nephew (the storyteller) tries to figure out why the old man lost. His epiphany comes from the opponent's manager: "All you have to remember is one name: Roosevelt." It seems that the New Deal, despite accepting the help of the machines, actually undermined them. "What Roosevelt did," the manager says, "was to take the handouts out of the local hands." In other words, a Great Irony occurred. The Democrats took the dealmaking to the national level. The machines lost their patronage, so the Skeffingtons could no longer be the patrons.

That may have sounded right in 1956, but the best was yet to come. Not only had Irish, Italians, Poles, Germans, and a dozen other tribes worked their way into dealmaking in the Democratic Party, but traditionalist native American people of color (primarily black) learned along the way to do it, too. After Martin Luther King, Jr., came on the scene they had the perfect political storm: tribal politics framed by ideologues and seized by an opportunistic Irish Catholic president whose maternal grandfather happened to be "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, one of the legendary Boston machine politicians. Combining his father's money, utterly cynical uses of the black and Catholic cards, an easy wooing of the chattering classes, and a charm that was at once Irish and cosmopolitan, Kennedy took the New Deal to a new level. It wasn't at all necessary to maneuver the Richard Daleys out of the way; it was necessary to enlist them into the grand operations of the nanny state. The machines, far from disappearing, became the custodians of patronage not only in police and fire departments, and parks and recreation, but in all the hundreds of dispensing agencies dreamed up and funded by the national government. Plunkitt thought the municipal government should run most everything in New York. Our current President thinks that about the federal government.

This system is not unlike the clientage of ancient Rome, where most things got done (including the military, beginning with Augustus) through organizations run by a patron and his clients. It is also similar to the principle of *fidelus* in the Middle Ages, minus the religious oaths. To understand the Saul Alinsky organizational principles behind all this (principles which the Clintons and the Obamas absorbed early in life) one does not have to resort to abstract terms like *liberalism* or *socialism*. In fact, such terms are misleading. The system depends on maintaining large and

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ever-renewable populations of dependent or potentially dependent groups so that whatever melting eventually takes place cannot produce a stable culture (as, Clyde Wilson once pointed out, seemed to be happening for a while after World War II).

Viewed from this angle, the Immigration Act of 1965 and the Voting Rights Act of that same year are the real foundations of what has emerged as the newest version of the New Deal. Combined with a refusal to police the borders—Democrats and Republican businessmen welcome the illegals, and the rest just lack courage—these two laws have transformed the electorate once again. Most Americans are unaware that immigration since 1965 dwarfs the earlier and supposed "age of immigration." Every time one group partially melts, having taken its place in the ever-expanding machine, another comes along to help the left keep up its perpetual state of crisis.

So, buy any of the pro-immigration arguments you want to buy, but don't fool yourself into believing that immigration, legal or not, has little effect on culture, or that the left is just trying to play Good Samaritan.

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Old Bird on a Telephone Pole, Old Man Watching

by David Middleton

With black wings pressed against his sides he stays
High-perched alone while younger birds untold
That sought mosquito hawks warm summer days
Are far in flight from northern night and cold.

Below the twilight grays of cloud and sky
The bird is fixed on nothing as he stares
Beyond the downcast eyes of passersby
All caught in a bewilderment he shares.

Enclosed in dimming clouds a full moon glows,
Mere symbol of itself as it would seem
To one who fears the little that he knows
Is like a bird's eye darkening agleam.

He stands with hands in pockets deeply pressed,
His form grown blacker now as night grows old,
Like that lone bird whose essence he had guessed
Was ghostly as his own in polar cold.

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George McCartney, Jr.

Cannibal Statistics

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

IN DEBATE, it is always possible to be right for the wrong reason. For instance, in supporting the proposition that cannibalism is immoral, I might argue that, historically, cannibalism encouraged the killing of human beings who might otherwise have been kidnapped by Arabs or rival African tribesmen and sold into slavery in the southern United States for a substantial profit. It is also possible to be wrong for a lesser reason, as, in the present case, I would be in pressing the immorality of consuming human flesh by suggesting that it further tempts conscientious vegetarians to eat meat at any time, or Roman Catholics to eat it on Fridays.

The first argument would strike most listeners as being grossly offensive for its utilitarian reference point applied to a fundamental humanitarian issue, while the second would offend by reason of its moral triviality in respect of an issue of capital morality. In the circumstances, being right about the immorality of cannibalism is nearly as wrong and inhuman as asserting the morality of this barbarous practice would be.

Another apparent instance of the potential for wrongness in being right is a personal one. For a quarter-century now, I have argued, frequently and consistently, against mass immigration to the United States and the countries of Western Europe; I have even gone so far as to write a book about it, and to edit another. For doing so, I and similarly minded colleagues have been vilified, ostracized, and had our means of support threatened by self-described conservatives who disagreed with us on the subject—at the time. In recent years they have come round more or less to agree with our position, without ever making apology for their previous campaign of intimidation and defamation, not to mention their wrongness on the issue. Why? I can only conclude that it is a case, on our part, of premature anti-immigrationism, which is to say, of having been right for the wrong reasons, which, in turn, translates as having been right about the dangers of immigration from the wrong motives, whatever "conservatives" suspect those motives may have been. It is only a metaphor to suggest, as I do, that our

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country, and the civilization of which it is both part and product, have, for the past half-century, been in the process of cannibalization by hordes of barbarians (some of them in the Greek sense of the term, others not) arriving from around the world to share in Americans' overall standard of living, political stability, and public benefits. Only a metaphor—but the metaphor, said Aristotle, is supreme among the poetic figures of speech. Aristotle's opinion, however, would be unappealing to the new restrictionists, whose objections to a new influx of Haitian refugees to this country are less likely to reflect a concern for the voodooization of Queens, New York, than for the threat Third World immigrants pose to the future of the Republican Party and to the health of taxpayers' pocketbooks in the financial circumstances recently assured by the passage of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, and who, in any event, would be offended by the highly insensitive invocation of the practice of cannibalism, even as a figure of speech. (We are back to reasons and motives again.)

I am by no means insensitive, as I was careful to state 14 years ago in my book, to the economic aspects of the case for immigration, or against immigration. Economics is important, as it was with the case of the Arab and native traders in Africa for many centuries. Our trade imbalance with China is obviously important, as is the transfer of our manufacturing base abroad, as is the pegging of the yuan to the dollar, as is the outsourcing of American jobs overseas, as is our indebtedness to the government in Beijing, as is our surreal national debt, and in point of fact I argue, in print and in conversation, against these things every chance I get. It is simply that economics, and economic considerations, are hardly the highest considerations in human affairs—or, if they are, they shouldn't be. Man does not live by numbers alone. (Here I must add that, for me, "economics" in the context means all quantifiable considerations, not those of cash and property only.) And so I, too, am "offended," as everyone else seems to be today about one thing or another, by hearing the future and fate of my country debated in quantitative terms, whether these have to do with the cost benefit or loss *per capita* involving immigrants; the investment value of immigration taken on the same basis; the need for immigrants to do jobs Americans won't do or, conversely, the need for unemployed Americans to be given access to the jobs Americans won't do so long as they are held in prison lifting weights and watching television rather than getting sent out on chain gangs to pick cherries and artichokes; the effect, positive or negative, of immigration on national "productivity"; the issue of whether immigrants take more from the public purse than they put into it; the importance of accepting technically educated immigrants and immigrant scientists as a means to maintain America's scientific edge in the world; the need American business has for population growth to produce more consumers to purchase more consumer goods; the net cost of educating immigrant children; and so forth. It is not that these considerations are insignificant, or that arguments regarding them are foolish and futile, nor is it that quantitative concerns regarding immigration (or anything else) are unworthy *per se* of the great national debate. Data, for example, concerning the destruction of agricultural land to make way for more highways and farther-sprawling cities;

Statistics are thought to be cleansed of motives, and as such are tolerated in the endless, and endlessly self-renewing, immigration debate. Unfortunately, the only considerations relevant to the debate that are also of crucial significance are by nature unquantifiable and madly resist statistical expression.

the depletion of natural resources by an exploding population caused by immigration; the destruction of what we call "wilderness," natural habitat, and the fauna and flora that live there; and the spread of pollution are all of the essence of the immigration battle. But these things, though they can be expressed in quantitative terms, cannot be reduced to them; they are, by nature, not quantifiable, any more than a home is reducible to a house. The United States was the home of many generations of the American people, and it is still the home of many scores of millions of their descendants (including me). For decades, this home, and with it this house, have been in the process of invasion by scores more millions of invaders, coming illegally or legalized, as the case may be, by a series of treasonous governments well lodged in the deep pockets of the quantifiers and their masters and heavily influenced by the post-Marxist ideology

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called multiculturalism. Americans who do not find themselves offended by the situation are not Americans at all, no more than the "new Americans" like the Mexican girl invoked by John McCain during the campaign of 2008, who, having just sneaked across the southwest border with her family, is, to the eye of the former Republican candidate for president, as truly an American as the descendant of a passenger aboard the *Mayflower*.

THE ENGLISH WRITER A.N. WILSON, in his book *Our Times*, characterizes the reign of Queen Elizabeth II as the era when "Britain ceased being Britain." Wilson does not have solely in mind, nor does he describe, the effects of mass Muslim immigration to the United Kingdom. He is thinking of the change by which Britons ceased being Britons, an even more tragic development. While visiting England last fall I was able to observe the results of both the demographic change and the psychological one. I could have counted the immigrants I saw, supposing I had an army of counters to assist me. But I could never have described the probable state of mind of the Londoner I saw by the Marble Arch: red-faced and weathered looking, a yachtsman perhaps, wearing a tailored gray suit and dark hat and carrying a briefcase and rolled brolly, ducking through the colored crowd at the top of Park Lane where it runs up to Oxford Street. An alien in his native land, he might have been an English civil servant stranded in the Calcutta mob of a century ago. Head down, looking neither left nor right, he made his way toward Oxford Street like a ghost, seeming to pass straight through the crowd. I felt a great pity for this man and an urge to smile at or salute him, but a stranger from America, not even a presentable one, doesn't approach an Englishman such as he on a public street. He looked like a City man, and I could only hope that, in that capacity, he was not himself one of the quantifiers who had helped bring his country to such a pass, having made a fortune for himself and his firm. Could there be any quantitative advantage to justify such a scene? Visiting London for the first time after nearly a half-century, I felt more deeply the fate of Britain than I do that of my own country—perhaps because she is our mother, racially, culturally, and politically. Julian Simon, of course, would have found all this irrational, but he has gone to his reward, on which speculation is inappropriate.

The United States has no glorious culture, no history comparable with that of Great Britain and the great Western European nations. Rooted in the thin acidic topsoil of the Enlightenment, and at a deeper level in the even thinner and more acid subsoil of Puritanism; deprived of an hereditary aristocracy for which a more or less barbaric plutocracy has necessarily substituted; mentally and socially crippled by bumpkin preachers at the bottom of the religious structure and by otiose transcendentalist divines at its top; retarded by its frontier culture; corrupted by the worship of money, science, and technique and by the false religions of Progress and Democracy—high culture at the European level was never to be a part of America's destiny. (The English, despite the self-inflicted and incurable wound of the Reformation, at least had the sense to kick the sectarians out at the beginning of the 17th century. Chesterton, on a lecture tour in the United States, quipped, to nobody's amusement, that Great Britain, too, should have her own Thanksgiving Day, offering up her heartfelt thanks for the God-sent departure of the Puritans from England.) And yet American civilization, despite its undeniable shallowness by comparison with that of Europe, does represent the cultural and intellectual flowering of a unique, vigorous, and interesting people who succeeded for a time in creating a culture well suited to, and highly expressive of, its geographical and material circumstances, as Tocqueville understood. The trouble with America is that she never realized her great potential, and the chief reason that she failed to do so is the irresponsible profligacy of her immigration policy, driven almost entirely at the behest, indeed the demand, of the business and industrial elites who, from the beginning, showed no concern for the future of their country but merely for what they might realize from it in the short term. (How could it have been otherwise? They were wealthy men of business, not aristocrats, whose historical role has been to act as husbandmen for their countries.) Mass culture, together with mass democracy, by themselves ensured the destruction of the traditional American civilization (America's colonial past, remember, is nearly as long as her history as the United States), but the racial and ethnic fragmentation of society produced by immigration ensured that the old civilization was not long for this world.

There is no more chance, of course, of restoring the old American Republic, either in political spirit or in general culture, than of restoring the Roman Republic. And so there would be no need or excuse for deploring its passage but for one thing: As the history of the West since 1789 shows, a bad situation, no matter how bad, can always be made worse. As socially fragmented as American society has become, and as much as its culture has been degraded by immigration, they will inevitably become more so if mass immigration from the Third World is not soon halted. There are, still, many valuable relicts that deserve to be preserved. But contemporary mainstream culture will

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not permit this truth to be spoken when the message is expressed in subjective historical, cultural, and moral terms. The demons of multiculturalism simply will not permit such a thing. Statistics are acceptable, though generally not welcome. Statistics are social science, after all, and social science is the study of man objectivized, depersonalized, and quantified. Statistics are thought to be cleansed of motives, and as such are tolerated in the endless, and endlessly self-renewing, immigration debate. Unfortunately, the only considerations relevant to the debate that are also of crucial significance are by nature unquantifiable and madly resist statistical expression.

When, a couple of decades or more ago, a colleague of mine introduced such vital concerns in respect of immigration at a policy meeting in Washington, he was taken aside privately and warned that he risked professional ostracism by departing from the conventional, and conventionalized, statistically based arguments against immigration. His answer was that, if he couldn't discuss the issues that really mattered, he preferred not to have a part in the debate at all. Of course, this man continued to talk and write about immigration, and on his own terms, but all of us on our side, for a time, were the worse for it, thanks to the political intrigues of the "conservative" johnny-come-lately anti-immigrationists, who, even now, can scarcely bring themselves to address the cultural issue with regard to immigration and, so far as I know, have never once expressed the opinion that America was a better place before the great waves of immigration at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, or even the year 1965, when the surviving Kennedy brothers conspired to put through the Immigration Act that has subsequently all but wrecked the United States as a socially and politically coherent nation. Nevertheless, I wish them the satisfaction of mind and the purity of conscience that come with the achievement of arriving at correct conclusions by way of all the wrong and most irrelevant arguments. That, at least, is more than what the vast majority of American journalists, academics, and politicians have managed to do.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., Chronicles' *senior editor for books, is the author of* The Immigration Mystique: America's False Conscience *(Basic Books), and editor of* Immigration and the American Future *(Chronicles Press).*

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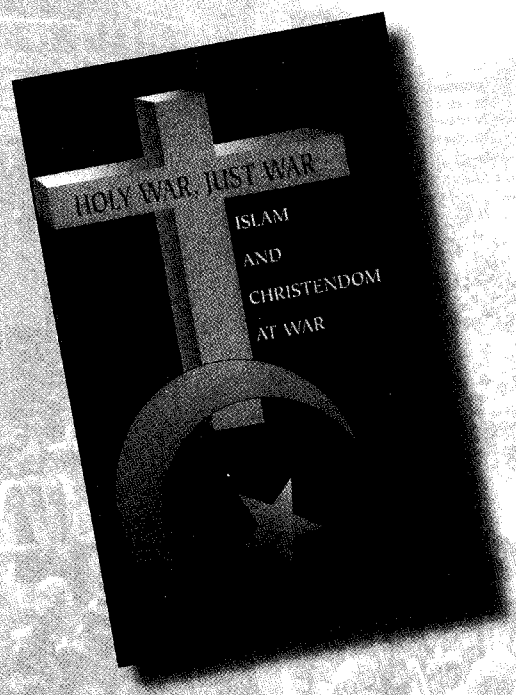

Holy War, Just War

Islam and Christendom at War

by Roberto de Mattei

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Double Down: Illegal Aliens and Crime

by Roger D. McGrath

For too long now I have heard that illegal immigrants are not criminals and that they have come to America only to work. Not really. Whether or not they want to work, they have already committed a crime by illegally entering the United States. I am still naive enough to think that national sovereignty should mean something. Whether or not they want to work, they also come here to have babies. The birthrate for illegal-alien mothers is more than double that for native-born American women, and higher even than the birthrate for legal immigrants. Moreover, the only-want-to-work argument ignores the enormous costs to U.S. taxpayers that come with illegal aliens, especially for medical care and for schooling and other services we provide for their children, American born or not. These costs are helping to sink the city of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District in a sea of debt.

As if this isn't bad enough, many illegal immigrants come here precisely because they are criminals and they find America a target-rich environment. This is particularly true of Mexican criminals, who make a practice of committing crimes in the United States, slipping back into Mexico, and then, rested and equipped with new identities, returning here. I have seen Mexicans deported for their third or fourth time, and each time, the same criminal has a new name. Since this continues to occur with alarming frequency, I am forced to conclude that our southern border remains porous and that our federal officials are not serious about border enforcement.

My own Ventura County in Southern California suffers from the depredations of such illegal aliens daily. Our local newspaper, the *Star*, prints a weekly feature, "Most Wanted of Ventura County," which includes photos, names, crimes, and full descriptions of the six most-wanted miscreants each week. Week in and week out, four or five of the six, and occasionally six of the six, are Hispanic. Not infrequently, a note will say, "Thought to have fled to Mexico." There are other clues to their illegal-alien status. Their first names are rendered in Spanish rather than in English: There is Timoteo instead of Timothy, Gerardo instead of Gerard, Antonio instead of Anthony, Guillermo instead of William, Rogelio instead of Roger, Diego instead of James. The old-time Mexican-American families in California usually give their children Anglo names. Then, too, many of the miscreants have aliases. Gerardo Rodrigo Lopez is also Rodrigo Ramirez Velasco. An entirely different criminal, Gerardo Garcia Granados, is also Gerardo Rodrigo Lopez. You figure it out. Law enforcement can't.

Late in March, Jose Antonio Medina Arreguin, called the King of Heroin by Mexican authorities, was arrested in the state of Michoacán. For at least the last three or four years he had smuggled an average of 440 pounds of heroin each month into California, earning his organization a monthly gross of $12 million. His distribution center was Oxnard, which is Ventura County's largest and most Hispanic city. One third or more—some say it may be closer to one half—of Oxnard residents are illegal aliens or the children of illegal aliens. Oxnard's crime dwarfs that of every other town in Ventura County. With a population of 180,000, Oxnard usually has 25 or more murders per year. Some 20 miles to the east in Ventura County, Thousand Oaks, with a population of 130,000, largely white and native born, usually has no murders in any given year, although it occasionally sees one or two. Other crime categories reveal similarly striking disparities between the two cities.

Arreguin, or Don Pepe as he was known, found Oxnard ideal for his operations. His gangsters could blend in with the population, move about quite openly, and supply black-tar heroin and methamphetamines to a network of dealers from San Diego to San Jose. Oxnard police and Ventura County sheriff's deputies learned of the operation in 2007 and formed the Ventura County Combined Agency Team. Wiretaps and surveillance led to the first break in 2008 with the arrest of dozens of street dealers and of Don Pepe's drug lords in California—Salvador Alvarez, Julio Ramirez, Jr., and Julio Ramirez, Sr.—and the seizure of 28 pounds of methamphetamines and 131 pounds of heroin. The amount of heroin seized was unprecedented in Ventura County, and yet it represents only a small portion of what Arreguin's organization distributed throughout California each month.

Despite intercepting and taping the phone conversations between Arreguin and the Ramirezes, authorities knew Arreguin only as Don Pepe. They eventually determined that he spent most of his time in Michoacán but that the heroin came from poppies grown farther south in the state of Guerrero. The bulk of the heroin was transported to Tijuana and then smuggled across the border in

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concealed compartments in cars to the distribution center in Oxnard. Agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration presented the evidence gathered by the Ventura County Combined Agency Team to Mexican authorities, and the latter began their own investigation. After two years of work they finally identified Don Pepe as Arreguin and arrested him in Michoacán's fourth-largest city, Apatzingán. Transported to Mexico City, Don Pepe was paraded in front of reporters, while heavily armed police officers, their faces covered with knit masks and their chests with body armor, stood guard. Arreguin was clearly a big catch.

Ventura County District Attorney Greg Totten is now trying to have Arreguin extradited to Ventura County for trial on various drug-trafficking charges. It could take a year or more to get Arreguin extradited. He may never be. Thus far, Mexican authorities have not revealed whether Don Pepe is a principal figure in La Familia, the powerful drug cartel that dominates Michoacán and has killed hundreds of rival drug traffickers, police, and soldiers. Considering the size of his operation, it would seem that he must have had at least a working relationship with the cartel. I suspect either that serious obstacles will arise to his extradition or that he will not live to be extradited. If he does arrive safe and sound here in Ventura County, his trial will be a sensation.

District Attorney Totten was elated at the success of the Combined Agency Team, saying, "It is the first time that local law enforcement has investigated and prosecuted a drug trafficking organization of this nature that is operating deep within the country of Mexico." Totten's language is a bit paradoxical. Thus far Ventura authorities have only prosecuted the portion of Arreguin's drug-trafficking organization that was operating well within the country of the United States. We haven't penetrated deep into Mexico; Mexican criminals have penetrated deep into the United States. These Mexican gangsters seem to come and go across our border with impunity and live openly among other illegal aliens—those who come here "only to work"—in our towns and cities. Why should such conditions prevail?

Until the last few years, most counties made no attempt to determine the immigration status of inmates in their jails. Ventura County was a pioneer in the effort to determine status but only because of the work of the congressman who represents a good portion of the county, Elton Gallegly. More than a decade ago he created a program that assigned federal immigration agents to the Ventura County jail. At that time only two agents worked the jail and usually for no more than two days per week. The agents were able to interview only a portion of the suspected illegal aliens who are arrested and jailed daily. Twenty or thirty were identified each day, but others passed through the system undetected. "There are many that we miss," admitted agent David Wales in July 2006. He said that agents prioritized their interviews, starting with those suspected illegal aliens accused of the most heinous crimes. "There's nothing that is 100 percent, but we work very hard to keep those folks from getting back on the street."

None of this has to be. We could deport not only all criminal illegal aliens but all illegal aliens if only we had the political will. That we don't at least deport all illegal aliens who have doubled down by committing crimes—in addition to illegal entry—is especially galling.

Late in 2008 Gallegly's program was improved by the Secure Communities Initiative, which allows county jails to compare inmates' fingerprints with FBI criminal records and with immigration records maintained by the Department of Homeland Security. The fingerprints housed in the database include only those of people who have had contact with the department. Nonetheless, since implementation of the Secure Communities Initiative, 18,000 inmates, charged with such Level I crimes as murder, kidnapping, and rape, have been identified as illegal aliens. Thus far, 4,000 of them have been deported. Another 25,000 illegal aliens charged with lesser crimes such as burglary have been deported—but that is only a fraction of those incarcerated. Just how many illegal aliens are in our county jails—not prisons—is a matter of speculation, but the figure is conservatively put at more than 100,000.

IT IS WELL AND GOOD that thousands of illegal aliens who have committed crimes such as murder or rape or burglary have been apprehended and deported, but why did we not stop them at our border in the first place?

Deportation gives the impression that the federal gov-

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ernment is finally taking some real action. However, as long as the border remains porous, the illegal-alien felons simply return at their own discretion. For a time I kept a file that eventually ran into the hundreds on local illegal aliens who had been deported multiple times after committing serious felonies. There is now a new crime: committing a felony after previously being deported. It seems unlikely the new law will have much of an effect. Recently, Jose Uriel Zamora was arrested in Santa Paula, once upon a time a quaint Ventura County town that has seen its illegal-alien and gang population multiply severalfold over the last three decades. Zamora was charged with weapons violations, street terrorism, animal cruelty (mistreatment of pit bulls), and committing felonies after previously being deported. I expect to see Zamora tried, convicted, and deported. I also expect to see him back in Santa Paula or some other once-quaint California town before too many years have passed.

One Oxnard resident who was deported and came back to murder (allegedly) is Maximo Tamayo-Flores. A routine traffic stop led to Flores's undoing. When a police officer approached the small pickup truck Flores was driving, a woman jumped out screaming. Flores roared off but crashed a short distance away and was arrested after a struggle. Speaking in Spanish, the woman claimed that Flores had murdered her husband, Raymond Quintero Rodriguez, and dumped his body over the side of the Pacific Coast Highway north of Ventura. The body was subsequently found on a rocky slope between the PCH and the surf. Flores was immediately charged with assault on a police officer and evading arrest. He was later charged with felony illegal entry into the United States, an offense applied to those who have been deported and have illegally reentered. It is expected that he will also soon be charged with the murder of Rodriguez.

Over the last 30 years I've followed hundreds of similar cases involving illegal aliens in Ventura County—and Ventura County is a relative paradise when compared with Los Angeles County. None of this has to be. We could deport not only all criminal illegal aliens but all illegal aliens if only we had the political will. That we don't at least deport all illegal aliens who have doubled down by committing crimes—in addition to illegal entry—is especially galling.

For those who like to pretend that the problem with mass deportation of illegal aliens is not a matter of political will but of logistics, there is a precedent that stands their argument on its head. By the time that Dwight Eisenhower arrived in the White House in 1953, the numbers of illegal aliens from Mexico had climbed to some two million. Nearly all resided in three states: California, Arizona, and Texas. U.S. citizens in those states complained that illegal aliens undercut wages, committed crimes, caused a general deterioration of American communities, and had children who overcrowded local schools and burdened entire school districts. American businessmen and corporate farmers—with a good number of congressmen such as Sen. Lyndon Johnson in their pockets—argued that the labor provided by the illegal aliens was desperately needed. The argument was as fallacious then as it is now. There was no shortage of labor if the wages were good. In the Rio Grande Valley, for example, where most farm laborers were illegal aliens, wages were half of what American-born farm laborers earned in the rest of Texas. Employers of illegal aliens, then as now, were making out like bandits, while U.S. citizens were paying for it.

Early in 1954, President Eisenhower appointed retired Lt. Gen. Joseph "Jumpin' Joe" Swing, who had commanded the 11th Airborne Division during World War II and was a West Point classmate of Ike's, as the new commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Jumpin' Joe, whose decorations included the Distinguished Service Cross and three Silver Stars, immediately formulated a plan for the apprehension and deportation of illegal aliens, naming it Operation Wetback. On D-day, June 17, 1954, some 750 INS agents began a sweep through Arizona and California. Within a month, Jumpin' Joe's boys had taken some 50,000 illegal aliens into custody, and an estimated half-million more, fearing arrest, had fled south of the border on their own.

During July, Swing sent his boys into Texas. By September they had 80,000 illegal aliens from the Lone Star state in custody. The INS estimated that another 500,000 to 700,000 illegal aliens left Texas voluntarily. There was a powerful incentive to do so. Those taken into custody were not simply dumped at the border but were put on buses and trains and escorted deep into Mexico, or on ships bound for Vera Cruz. Jumpin' Joe kept his agents in the field to the end of the year, averaging 1,000 apprehensions per day. By 1955 nearly all illegal aliens had been repatriated, and for the rest of the decade, illegal border crossings were rare. The chief of the Border Patrol from 1960-73, Donald Coppock, said when interviewed in 2007 that, if Ike and Jumpin' Joe were in charge of immigration enforcement today, they would rid the country of illegal aliens "in a minute." He's right.

Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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Attack of the Hyphenates

THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE is often framed in terms of ethnicity, and the arbiters of permissible expression are appalled that anyone would approach the issue in terms of cultural identity and a reasonable desire for homogeneity. Permit me, however, to raise a quite different objection to the unchecked flood of immigrants who have been deluging our borders: the danger it poses by strengthening the lobby of the Hyphenates, who ceaselessly agitate for Washington's intervention in their home countries' affairs.

Whether it be Kosovars with green cards who run pizza parlors in the Northeast or refugees from this or that Middle Eastern autocracy lobbying for the "liberation" of their homeland, the influence of foreign-born constituencies in the United States has always been a problem for anti-interventionists of the modern era—and today, the problem is acute.

In the run-up to U.S. intervention in the Balkans, the Albanian lobby was hyperactive, funneling money to such top Republican politicians as Bob Dole and John McCain, and greasing the axle of their p.r. machine with the largesse of the international drug trade, which is to Albanians what the derivatives trade is to Goldman Sachs.

In the period leading up to the invasion of Iraq, the infamous Ahmed Chalabi and his American interlocutors served as the spark plug of the War Party: Chalabi and his "heroes in error," as he famously averred, were the source of most of the lies that made up the administration's case for war, and many Iraqi-Americans actively urged U.S. intervention in order to oust the tyrant they had fled.

This poses a real problem for a polity such as ours, in which everyone has a voice, albeit some louder than others. In the foreign-policy debates that confront a multicultural empire, very often the most vocal and active are those Hyphenates who, having brought their ethnic grudges and ancient quarrels with them when they came here, create lobbying outfits to make the case for the motherland.

But of course the interests of the motherland and their adopted fatherland may be antipathetic. This hardly deters our Hyphenates from going all out—often supplied with ample resources from abroad—to frame the debate in terms favorable to their cause. The Haitians, the Cubans, the Nicaraguans—all have made their appearance in the court of American public opinion. And their success is almost preordained, since most unhyphenated Americans are completely indifferent to the conduct of foreign affairs, unless and until it affects them on a personal level.

In the Haitian case, the ties that bind African-Americans to the poorest country in the Western hemisphere are more intimate than mere racial solidarity: There are familial ties to the immigrant community here, too. This diaspora wields a certain amount of political clout in the urban centers of the Northeast, and, in alliance with the Congressional Black Caucus, has urged on serial American interventions in that perpetually troubled island.

For more than half a century, the Cuban-American lobby has prevented us from having any relations with Castro's regime, even long after the Soviets absconded and the Cold War became a fading memory. Which means that a native-born American who wishes to travel to Cuba—perhaps to take advantage of the spectacular beaches and cheap prices—is forbidden from doing so, thanks entirely to this obnoxious, volatile, and politically powerful group of Hyphenates.

Refugees from the Soviet bloc fatally distorted U.S. foreign policy for generations and made any sort of common-sense rapprochement with the Soviets politically impossible for an American politician with national ambitions—and this at a time when humanity teetered on the brink of nuclear self-immolation. And who can forget the power the China lobby—*i.e.*, the Taiwan lobby—held over Republican politicians (and movement conservatives) in the 50's and 60's, and still wields to some extent? That influence has been wholly malign, in that it has distorted the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy in a way that was (and is) profoundly opposed to the national interest. The Cold War might have ended 20 years earlier but for the political power exercised by this particular group of Hyphenates.

Of course, it isn't a straight-line projection of immigrant power that gives the Hyphenates their clout: They must ally with an indigenous pressure group, one with which they share some of the same goals. In the case of the Iraq war, the Iraqi exiles teamed up with Big Oil and the neoconservatives to set in motion a juggernaut of publicity and provocations, which precipitated war.

Limiting or even completely halting immigration won't stop the War Party, but it will put another obstacle in their path—and that's all to the good. ◆

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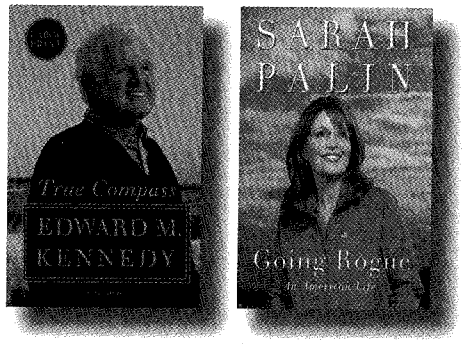

Great Cooptations

by W. James Antle III

True Compass: A Memoir
by Edward M. Kennedy
New York: Twelve
532 pages, $35.00

Going Rogue: An American Life
by Sarah Palin
New York: HarperCollins
432 pages, $28.99

Two politicians get conservative fundraisers' juices flowing like no others. One, the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, was surely mourned as much by ambitious Richard Viguerie imitators as by teary-eyed, Camelot-addled liberals. The other, former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, they hope will be a gift that keeps on giving for many years to come.

Conservatives built a virtual cottage industry of Kennedy-mocking paraphernalia. There were bumper stickers proclaiming, "My gun has killed fewer people than Ted Kennedy's car." There were T-shirts identifying the wearer as a student at the "Ted Kennedy School of Swimming." No defense of Richard Nixon was complete without the phrase, "Nobody drowned in Watergate." And when the Chappaquiddick jokes finally grew tiresome, there was no end to the fun that could be had by ridiculing Kennedy's improbable combination of corpulence and philandering.

Sarah Palin does not have any of the later-year Ted Kennedy's problems with physical attractiveness. After she burst onto the scene as John McCain's running mate in the last election, she emerged as something of a sex symbol for middle-aged conservative men. Her smiling, bespectacled face graced magazine covers. The late-night television talk shows were filled with bawdy references to the vice-presidential candidate as a "hot" schoolteacher or librarian. Now that she is mainly a conservative celebrity, Palin has taken up residence on those talk shows herself, joking about doing an impression of former *Saturday Night Live* cast member Tina Fey.

Kennedy and Palin do not merely get conservatives exercised, however. They attract equal and opposite reactions from liberals. Liberals adore Ted Kennedy as a dutiful son in America's royal family. They identify with his "dream" that "shall never die." In him, they see their ambitions for socialized medicine, massive antipoverty spending programs, and a national economy totally restructured along egalitarian lines, until every oppressor is brought low by an ever-expanding list of victims.

Sarah Palin, by contrast, is an object of liberal scorn and condescension. She is said to represent the dumb, Bible-thumping, trailer-trash school of conservatism that threatens to transform our secular, cosmopolitan republic into—as one anti-Republican e-mail chain from the aftermath of the 2004 presidential campaign memorably called it—"Jesusland." The Palin of ferocious liberal imagination is censorious, fundamentalist, and, as the former conservative journalist David Brock once said of Anita Hill, "a bit nutty and a bit slutty."

What did these two figures do to elicit such adoration and derision from their respective supporters and detractors? In Kennedy's case, it is easy enough to see. During his long, productive career in the Senate, he helped obliterate the country's borders, unleash a stream of uninterrupted mass immigration, harden antidiscrimination laws into racial quotas, incrementally expand federal control of healthcare and education, massively increase spending while putting commensurate upward pressure on taxes, and legitimize liberal Catholics' support for abortion on demand and the abolition of the traditional family.

Even much of the good Kennedy did—such as using his high-decibel voice to speak out against the occasional unjust war—was mitigated by his rank partisanship. When Vietnam was his brother John F. Kennedy's war, Teddy shouted doves down with the contempt he would later reserve for Jesse Helms: "I wish they had raised their voices against Viet Cong terrorism, against Viet Cong murder, kidnapping, and political assassination." He further argued, "Any facilities in North Vietnam strengthening the Viet Cong should be bombed." Kennedy was seldom a peacenik during the conflicts Bob Dole crankily described as "Democrat wars"; he tended to be antiwar mainly under Republican commanders in chief.

But one man's trash is another man's treasure. To millions, the above record was the good Kennedy did. If you are unbothered by the demographic, cultural, and economic transformation of your country

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and prefer elaborately decorated senior citizens' centers in your hometown, courtesy of Uncle Sam's generosity, Kennedy may indeed be your hero. And Kennedy's rhetoric did channel much of what is decent about modern American liberalism: its compassion for the poor and downtrodden, its trepidation about military force, its genuine concern for the treatment of blacks and other groups that have been marginalized in our society (except when they, like unborn children, cannot vote).

It is a bit harder to see why people get so worked up over Sarah Palin. She is a professed Christian, a family woman, and a hunter, and she did not abort her own children or encourage the abortion of her grandchild. All good things, to be sure, but in other times they would not have been the stuff of heroism or villainy. As a politician, she was briefly mayor of the small town of Wasilla and then even more briefly the governor of Alaska, before joining the folly that was the 2008 McCain campaign.

Palin perceived that the Alaska Republican establishment, led by unpopular then-governor Frank Murkowski, was falling into disfavor. So she ran against that establishment in 2006, helped dislodge Murkowski in the Republican primary, and extended the GOP's control of Juneau in a difficult political climate. Similarly, she was quick to determine that a congressional earmark for the Bridge to Nowhere—which she once supported, holding up a pro-bridge "Nowhere, Alaska" T-shirt—was a fiasco in the making, so she adroitly pivoted on it. If all of this seems like rather thin grounds for becoming simultaneously the most hated and the most beloved political figure of our time, well, that's because it is.

During the 2008 campaign, Palin briefly breathed life into the moribund Republican ticket. She was everything McCain was not: energetic, effective on the stump, beloved by grassroots conservatives, and lifelike. She single-handedly derailed former Republican congressman Bob Barr's hopes of siphoning a significant share of the conservative vote, turning him into a typical Libertarian also-ran. Palin shone in her speech at the Republican National Convention, and it briefly looked like she was going to pull off the impossible: mobilize rank-and-file Republicans while drawing in enough disaffected Hillary voters to make the presidential contest a competitive race again.

But this was a lot to expect of a neophyte on the national stage. Palin's subsequent media appearances ranged from middling to catastrophic. She seemed unprepared and ill-informed in high-profile interviews. Then her running mate reacted to the financial meltdown by suspending his campaign, embracing the bipartisan Wall Street bailout, and otherwise acting like a crazy person. It was over.

Whatever their contributions to our politics, Sarah Palin and Ted Kennedy have both seen fit to add contributions to our literature. Palin's *Going Rogue: An American Life* may be a campaign autobiography, or it may be an attempt to extend her 15 minutes of fame. Kennedy's *True Compass: A Memoir* is the posthumously published swan song of a public figure. Neither is a great book, containing all the flaws and political score-settling endemic to the genre, but both succeed in demonstrating each "author's" virtues, as well as mistakes.

Though the bumper-sticker manufacturers would never admit it, Ted Kennedy actually had some conservative characteristics: a rootedness in a particular place; a fidelity to specific institutions, traditions, and people; and a sense of kinship and community. Unlike Martha Coakley, who tried to replace him in the Senate, Ted Kennedy would never have mocked an opponent for campaigning outside Fenway Park in the cold before an election. He would not have smeared legendary Red Sox pitchers as Yankee fans. Kennedy stubbornly clung to his Boston accent his whole life. "The state and city of my birth are extensions of myself and my family," he writes in *True Compass*. Yet Kennedy's expression of his rootedness also reveals his emotional orientations: Note that he sees the state and city of his birth as extensions of himself and the Kennedys, not the other way around.

This is how Kennedy was able to win so many votes from people who disagreed with him about tax cuts, abortion, immigration, forced busing, and countless other issues: They sensed that, however rich and powerful he was, his appreciation for their shared customs and traditions made him one of them. Voting for Kennedy was like attending Mass, eating clam chowder, and cheering a Red Sox home run. Yet Kennedy used his cultural solidarity with the residents of his state and city to lord it over them.

As Matthew Richer observed on *VDare.com*, "New England has always been a region of 'little platoons,' where people proudly retain their local customs and accents." But because of the Yankees' egalitarian politics and the white ethnics' own immigrant backgrounds, New Englanders were slow to appreciate the cultural impact of mass immigration unaccompanied by assimilation. Moreover, while serving as floor manager for the disastrous 1965 Immigration Act, Kennedy took care to withhold from his constituents information that would inevitably have aroused their concern. Instead, Kennedy, then chairman of the Senate's immigration subcommittee, proceeded to give the American people a list of "What the bill will not do": "First, our cities will not be flooded with a million immigrants annually. . . . Secondly, the ethnic mix of this country will not be upset." The results are now in, and Kennedy was wrong on both counts, if he ever even intended to be right.

Nevertheless, *True Compass* is animated by the universalist Kennedy's love of the particular: his parents, his brothers, his children, his compound, and his

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boat. Even the Catholic Church appears as an object of Kennedy's affection. But his was a strange Catholicism, completely divorced from God, Scripture, and the sacraments and seemingly based on a view of his Church as a cultural artifact. The book's one notable reference to the Bible occurs when Kennedy tries to tie his salvation to his liberalism:

> My own center of belief, as I matured and grew curious about these things, moved toward the great Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25 especially, in which he calls us to care for the least of these among us, and feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, visit the imprisoned. It's enormously significant to me that the only description in the Bible about salvation is tied to one's willingness to act on behalf of one's fellow human beings.

This second sentence is as self-serving as it is wrong, and it is conspicuous that Kennedy doesn't identify the "he" who is doing the calling as Jesus, Who goes unmentioned throughout *True Compass*.

IN *GOING ROGUE*, Sarah Palin, by comparison, invokes God unashamedly. She speaks frequently about the content of her faith, the Bible, church, and prayer chains. She even recounts some of her own personal prayers: "I sat down on the grass and prayed, 'God, thank You. Thank You for Your faithfulness . . . always seeing us through . . . '" Like Kennedy, she connects her religion and her politics. Palin recounts telling Alaskans in her first address to them as governor, "More government isn't the answer because you have ability, because you are Alaskans, and you live in a land that God, with incredible benevolence, decided to overwhelmingly [*sic*] bless."

Sarah Palin's opinions regarding constitutionally limited government are generally sound. She writes that "national leaders have a responsibility to respect the Tenth Amendment and keep their hands off the states," while, as a budding decentralist, she believes that "local government is best able to prioritize services and projects." This she calls "the basis of the Tenth Amendment." But the distant Capitol that cannot be trusted to manage the affairs of Alaskans or Arizonans seems to her infinitely wise and benevolent when it comes to nation-building for the Iraqis, the Afghans, and, presumably, the Iranians. "Today our sons and daughters are fighting in distant countries to protect our freedoms and to nurture freedom for others," Palin writes. "I understand that many Americans are war-weary, but we do have a responsibility to complete our missions in these countries so that we can keep our homeland safe."

"We are both the world's sword and its shield," she continues.

> [W]e lend not just our strength but the support of a free people to others who are fighting for their freedom. They need to know that America is not indifferent to their struggles but will lend her considerable diplomatic power to their cause. Nations like Israel need to be confident of our support.

In respect of the republic *versus* empire debate, Palin adds,

> Some people ask whether we are still a republic, or whether we are becoming an empire, doomed to fade away like all the other empires once thought to be invincible.
>
> We are still a republic. We are certainly not doomed to fade away. And we have no desire to be an empire. We don't want to colonize other countries or force our ideals on them. But we have been given a unique responsibility: to show the world the meaning and the rewards of freedom. America, as Reagan said, is "the abiding alternative to tyranny." We must remain the Shining City on a Hill to all who seek freedom and prosperity.

Millions of conservatives sympathize with Sarah Palin because she is so much like them: a woman of decent and normal impulses in favor of faith, patriotism, and regional pride. They are the Americans (like Palin's son Track) who proudly wear the uniform of this country and fight in its wars. They are the ones whose taxes finance the welfare-warfare state. But their values make them susceptible to the appeal of American exceptionalism, through which ideologues and opportunists gain power by persuading good-hearted people to support unnecessary wars and the indiscriminate election of Republican politicians.

The Tea Party movement, in which Palin is active, is a case in point. What began largely as a citizen reaction to the growth of the federal leviathan is already being taken over by Republican hacks and neocon pamphleteers. The process is much like that by which Palin herself, in a little more than a decade's time, went from being a member of the Buchanan brigades (she recently said that she first learned of Richard Pipes' call to bomb Iran in a column by Pat Buchanan) to being Randy Scheunemann's foreign-policy pupil.

While *True Compass* and *Going Rogue* contain much of interest, both books are ultimately stories of how the political class takes what is good and true to gin up enthusiasm for a two-party system that too often resembles a sporting event between the red team and the blue team.

W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator.

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Courtesy

by David Middleton

He stands when women enter, though his mind
No longer knows their names or why he rises—
Dementia, that cold word our science devises
To explain away this mystery we find.

His nature shaped by Latin and the Mass,
By knives that cut so sweetly through the cane
When fall's bent reapers gathered in the rain,
By desk and ledger where his years would pass:

He made his way for decades toward the house,
First teacher, then the bookkeeper who earned
Enough that an indebted master yearned
At last for him to be his daughter's spouse.

Paterfamilias to all he knew,
He's lived to see these days when most deny
Old mores that his manners still imply,
The standings up, deep bows from chair and pew.

And now, his land and manor house surrounded
By suburbs, malls, refineries, while age
Impairs his sense, awareness, speech, and rage,
He's left with self whose inwardness is founded

On public rites that bear a private mind
By habit fixed to rise for womankind.

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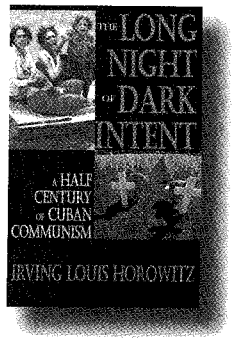

Past, Present, and Future

by Darío Fernández-Morera

The Long Night of Dark Intent: A Half Century of Cuban Communism
by Irving Louis Horowitz
New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers
620 pp., $49.95

Transaction Publishers has a long history of producing first-rate scholarly works, among them a series of books under the title *Cuban Communism*, indispensable for the study of post-1959 Cuba. The present one, by the editor of the series, covers a half-century of Cuban Marxism and introduces us to many of the major issues related to the implementation and functioning of what its advocates have traditionally called "real" socialism, as opposed to the watered-down, big-finance-friendly socialism of the European and now also American social democracies.

Written in an easy style befitting the partly autobiographical Preface, the book is a distillation of decades of work on its subject. It comprises 47 relatively short chapters grouped chronologically in five sections: *1960's: Guerilla Dictatorship*; *1970's: Consolidation of Communism*; *1980's: Regionalization and Retreat*; and *2000's: Dissolution of Political Power*. It concludes with a fascinating chapter on the "narcissism" of Fidel Castro's latest "autobiography."

Chapter 12 ("The Cuba Lobby: Supplying Rope to a Mortgaged Revolution") and the related Chapters 35 ("The Cuba Lobby Upgrade: *Plus ça Change, Plus C'est la Même Chose*") and 36 ("The Cuban Embargo and American Interest") exemplify Horowitz's expert knowledge of even the most minute details of Cuban-American relations. Horowitz unveils the numerous instances of Cuba's covert and overt interventions in Latin America and Africa. He then traces the gradual weakening of the U.S. "embargo," which now allows commerce in telecommunications, agricultural products, humanitarian pharmaceuticals, charter flights, *etc.* Virginia, for example, increased agricultural exports to Cuba from less than $1 million to $40 million in five years, and Maryland sold $12.8 million worth of goods to Cuba in 2008. Horowitz reminds us that this weakening has taken place without corresponding concessions on the part of Cuba's regime. These chapters also examine the strange but not illogical alliance between, on the one hand, "progressive" American academics, "compassionate" ecclesiastics, Hollywood actors, "public policy" think-tank "experts," and even congressmen and senators, and, on the other hand, financial and business interests. The Cuba Lobby's motivations range from perennial academic sympathy toward Marxism, to "compassion" for the Cuban people, to presumably hard-nosed American self-interest, to plain greed, but its goal—a resumption of full commercial relations—remains unvaried. Horowitz observes that this lobby includes such academically influential organizations as the Latin American Studies Association, which enthusiastically brings to its U.S. conferences professors from Cuba while marginalizing Cuban-American professors who oppose the regime.

Horowitz masterly analyzes the Cuba Lobby and the embargo (imposed in February 1962 in retaliation for Cuba's seizure of the property of U.S. citizens and businesses), but, perhaps because he is not an economist, he does not discuss a possible consequence of resuming the unconditional sale of American goods: the likelihood that U.S. taxpayers will, as usual, be left holding the bag. In effect, Marxist Cuba already owes millions of dollars to countries with which she does have commercial relations and faces great difficulties in obtaining credit; she simply lacks the wherewithal to buy abroad. The United States would probably suffer the same fate as these countries. U.S. loan guarantees would minimize the risk to banks and businesses of selling to Cuba, but at the expense of U.S. taxpayers—a possibility that does not trouble the many commercial and select financial groups clamoring for an end to the embargo. As the Small Business Exporters Association cheerfully announced, since March 2009,

> A select group of commercial banks now will be able to offer terms of 180 days to five years on federally-guaranteed loans to the foreign buyers of U.S. exports without having to obtain prior federal approval. The change means that buyers of U.S. manufactured goods and other high-value exports can obtain their fi-

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> nancing in weeks or even days, a vast improvement over the many months that federal approval had previously required. . . . Because of the foreign risks involved in export lending, most commercial banks throughout the world do not make these loans without government guarantees. In the U.S., the guarantees are provided by the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank), a federal agency.

The discussion also offered an opportunity, not taken by Horowitz, for comparing the embargo against Cuba with other embargoes, such as the successful former world embargo against apartheid South Africa, or the U.S.-led embargo against Muslim Iran that is escalating today.

Two other omissions on Horowitz's part should be noticed. One is an account of the Cuban healthcare system, exposed in the formidable *Health, Politics, and Revolution in Cuba Since 1898* by Katherine Hirschfeld. The other is an account of the urban revolutionary groups that operated independently of Castro, and which weakened considerably the Batista dictatorship, sustained probably larger casualties than Castro's countryside guerillas, and made possible his eventual triumph. (See *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground*, by Julia E. Sweig.) Conspicuous among these groups was the Directorio Estudiantil Revolucionario, led by José Antonio Echevarría and Carlos Gutiérrez Menoyo (whose surviving brother, Eloy, took up arms against Castro and suffered imprisonment and torture for 22 years before being freed through the intercession of Spain's Felipe González in 1986). Among other things, the Directorio organized the brave (today we would merely say "terrorist") attack on Cuba's Presidential Palace ("*El asalto al palacio*") on March 13, 1957. (Like other events in Cuba during the 50's and 60's, this one has been vividly depicted in Andy García's wonderful 2005 movie *The Lost City.*) If the Directorio had succeeded in assassinating Batista on that day, the course of Cuban history might have changed. However, by January 1959, bled by brutal urban warfare, and with a decimated leadership (Echevarría, Gutiérrez Menoyo, Frank País, and Réne Ramos Latour had all been killed in combat in the cities), these revolutionary groups were no longer a match for the countryside guerillas of Castro, Che Guevara, and Camilo Cienfuegos. (A charismatic man, at the time more liked in Cuba than Guevara and nearly as much as Castro, Cienfuegos disappeared on October 28, 1959, officially in an airplane crash, although neither plane nor human remains were found.) Therefore, they were easily elbowed aside during the Marxist-Leninist takeover. This takeover became official with Castro's public declaration, in December 1961, that he had of course been a Marxist-Leninist while in the mountains, but he had needed to hide this fact because otherwise he never would have won.

This book does not make a connection between Karl Marx's ideas and the horrors Horowitz laments; in it, one searches in vain for a philosophical or religious premise that might have inoculated Horowitz against Marxist theory, without his having to wait for its Cuban application to erode his youthful sympathy for the Cuban Revolution. Significantly, neither *Marx* nor *Marxism* appears in the Index, in contrast to *Stalinism*—a word that, unlike *Marx* and *Marxism*, is academically acceptable and indeed ubiquitous in accounts of regimes that an author does not like but which, unfortunately, can usually claim to have been inspired by Marx's great ideas. Horowitz seems to be neither a philosophical conservative nor a libertarian. The fact of the matter is that, without some sound philosophical or religious moorings, costly experience alone can undeceive even the brightest people.

Nevertheless, *The Long Night of Dark Intent* is an enlightening book by a learned man who has probably done more to promote a scholarly understanding of post-1959 Cuba than anyone else in the United States.

Darío Fernández-Morera, an associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese and of comparative literary studies at Northwestern University, is the author of several books, including American Academia and the Survival of Marxist Ideas.

An Excerpt

In retrospect, the 1980s were the high point of the Castro Era. His regime was able to rid the nation of the potentially "counterrevolutionary" forces—numbering well over one million people, who left Cuba and the struggle within to more hospitable environs. The boatlift from Mariel to Miami may have tarnished the regime in world public opinion, and created a countervailing force in the United States, especially in the Florida region. This outward migration solidified Castro's hold on the working masses. It made opposition from within fragmented and reduced it to very limited proportions. The reticence of the advanced powers, especially the United States to enter into direct military confrontation was also a factor that played out in a Castro victory. Having the scars of Vietnam starting to heal from a decade of warfare, the West was neither ready nor capable of launching anything resembling a massive struggle.

—*from* The Long Night of Dark Intent, *by Irving Louis Horowitz*

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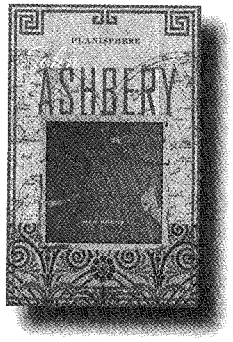

Not a Live Tribe

by Catharine Savage Brosman

Planisphere: New Poems
by John Ashbery
New York: Ecco/HarperCollins
160 pp., $24.99

ALPHABETICAL ORDER is useful for miscellaneous collections of items such as indexes, directories, dictionaries and encyclopedias, address books, and musings and bits of lore (Voltaire's *Alphabet of Wit*, for example). Elsewhere it serves a pedagogical purpose, as in children's readers and old collections (medieval bestiaries, botanical compendia). John Ashbery's latest volume, *Planisphere: New Poems*, contains 99 poems arranged alphabetically by title; the rationale for this organization is not, however, immediately evident. Might the alphabet have served as the inspiration for the collection? Probably not, since *K*, *Q*, and *X* have no corresponding poem, and most letters are overrepresented. Moreover, the fact that some poems were published previously in magazines suggests gestation over time and discrete composition rather than an initial governing intent. Might the author have been attracted by the possibilities of correlation between meaning and alphabetical order, the latter bringing out relationships, insights that enrich the whole? Possibly, if the reader's imagination is thereby activated fruitfully. Might Ashbery, instead, have decided on the arrangement for its very arbitrariness, its lack of inherent grounding—rational order imposed on miscellaneous material? This is quite likely, given the characteristics of his poetry—almost aleatory, marked by uncertainty, even apparent randomness. At least the alphabet has recognizable direction and structure. Perhaps Ashbery hoped that it would carry the reader to the end of the book.

The title image is appealing and suggestive; the way a planisphere represents on a flat surface what is actually spherical constitutes a *tour de force*, something like *pi*—useful, but never perfect. The art of poetry might be viewed similarly—a sort of defiance to prose, as language, like adjustable circles allowing display of celestial phenomena at any given time, is raised, by its own tricks, to a higher power, revealing aspects of being, otherwise shadowy, and new flashes of understanding, new perceptions of wholes. (Strangely, the design for the Title Page of *Planisphere*, though attractive, bears no relationship to the connotations of the word, whereas the dust cover includes an old French map of the heavens.) The challenge for readers of *Planisphere* is to make this leap to meaning—to move from flat to spherical, to force obscure (not to say nonsensical) language to render something seemingly beyond it. Much of the time, unfortunately, readers will be, as an earlier commentator put it, simply befuddled.

Ashbery (born in 1927) is a very prolific poet—also a sometime painter and critic of both literature and art—with excellent credentials. After Deerfield Academy, Harvard (A.B.), and Columbia (M.A.), he went to France on a Fulbright fellowship. He stayed ten years, serving as art editor for the French edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* and living with a French poet, Pierre Martory, whose work (along with that of better-known poets) he translated. Ashbery has won four major American literary prizes, including the Pulitzer, and was both a Guggenheim and a MacArthur Fellow. He is a member of prestigious academies and gave the 1989-90 Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard.

Shall we blame Ashbery's failures on the French? Surely not. He called himself "a harebrained, homegrown surrealist whose poetry defies even the rules and logic of Surrealism." Surrealism had, of course, no rules; its aim was iconoclasm. But the oneiric images by which it chiefly lived were not always without appeal. "Soluble Fish" (André Breton), like Meret Oppenheim's *Object (Furry Teacup)*, is not without facile charm in its irrationality. "The earth is blue like an orange" (Paul Eluard), a synthetic image omitting the middle term ("round"), gives a new, flashing perception of the globe. True, a little goes a long way; at the end of the path is silliness. Even among the wacky, however, there are degrees; some ravings have visual or verbal interest, wit in one sense or another, insight, vision, whereas others are worthless meanderings. In the present collection, Ashbery is often just juvenile and tedious, as in the poem "Half-Riders," which begins:

> Oh all the sheaves are getting
> attended

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to and the girth is right.
Then I have to start and say
with more *fish* at the door one is
also more
responsive,
takes that in and
plays some more.
The wounded in their fens
counter
we are a live tribe this
season!

To judge by this sample—not unrepresentative—of what a MacArthur "genius" can produce, maybe we'd better do without such towering talent. Or perhaps we readers are just not imaginative enough.

How has Ashbery achieved, and maintained, his stature? W.H. Auden's choice of Ashbery's early book for the Yale Series of Younger Poets gave him early momentum. An experimental impulse and cultivation of the weird propelled him forward, and he came back from Paris, one assumes, with the badge of the *avant-garde*. Connections in New York publishing did not hurt, nor his acquaintance with graphic artists. He had the support of Andy Warhol and, presumably, that of numerous others in the homosexual community, which influences disproportionately the distribution and reception of literary and art products. And some people really like this stuff, one concludes, while others think they are supposed to.

Ashbery's case illustrates how deplorably low the standards of literary appreciation in America—if one can speak of them—have fallen. The juvenile, the silly, the scandalous (to the degree there is any scandal left), the politically fashionable attract favorable attention, to the detriment of works having real aesthetic value. Ashbery's work—more than 50 years' worth—continues to get acclaim from well-placed figures in critical and academic circles in New York, London, and elsewhere. He is sometimes compared with Walt Whitman for his aims as well as his scope. "No figure looms so large in American poetry over the past 50 years," Langdon Hammer of Yale is quoted as saying. Nicholas Everett noted, however, in the *Times Literary Supplement* that some readers found Ashbery simply frustrating and dull. Stephen Burt, in the same publication, acknowledged that his poems "do not even seek the kinds of formal completion" found in Wallace Stevens. Ashbery "has become the poet of our multi-tasking, interruption-filled, and entertainment-seeking days." So much the worse for him, and us. The true artistic innovator goes beyond the contingencies and dictates of foolish fashion. Surrealism is passé; anyhow, though a major cultural movement, it was not productive of much great literature. Let's eschew poetry-as-entertainment and honor verse of mature literary sense and verbal beauty.

Catharine Savage Brosman is poetry editor for Chronicles.

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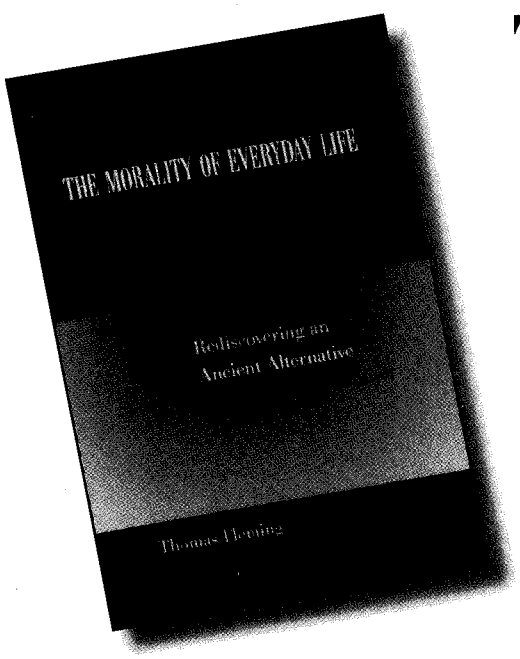

The Morality of Everyday Life

Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

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—*Ray Olson,* Booklist

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Aaron D. Wolf

Let's Cheat on Our Taxes

AS I WRITE, April 15 is still fresh in the mind, and the sting of death remains, combining the current pangs of tax extraction with the promise of a greater burden to come, thanks to the Barackification of heathcare.

So imagine my delight when I read in a back issue of a leading Christian magazine (call it *Evangelicalism Now*) that, come next April 15, I should just flip off Uncle Sam and cheat on my taxes.

I mean, sure, breaking the law bothers some people. EN mentions that: "The issue before us is not whether law should be obeyed in normal circumstances. We all agree on that." I feel better already, and my editorial brain is already forming the next sentence before I read it, and it has something to do with ours being abnormal circumstances.

"The question is: Under what circumstances is it appropriate to disobey a law?" Close enough!

As it turns out, cheating on my taxes is biblical. You doubt? Well maybe you've forgotten that recognizing that "the law is not everything" is "a biblical principle." You must have also forgotten that Daniel flouted the "laws of the Medes and Persians" to pray to the LORD. You must have accidentally not-remembered Rahab's treason against the devil-worshiping pagans of Jericho. You must be having a senior moment when it comes to Jesus and the Jewish Sabbath laws. And you must have missed your ginko biloba dose this morning, because Peter very memorably said, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey [the Jews] rather than God." Indeed, EN points out, "the law of the land is superseded by the law of love."

I think I love my family so much that I will give it my tax dollars.

As if that isn't enough to convince me, EN then puts down the NIV and picks up a miniature Old Glory and a sparkler. "[T]his nation itself was founded on overthrowing not just a law but an entire government." Now, at first my editorial brain paused at this. I thought a nation (Lat. *natio*, "birth, a people" from the verb *nascor*, "to be begotten") could be "founded" only by a father and not by an act of disobedience, but then I consulted my *Honest Abe's Dictionary of Olde Peculiar Terms*. So, yes, it is both biblical and American for me to cheat on my taxes. I can almost picture my boys on a set of matching ATVs.

I'VE BEEN FACETIOUSLY misleading. That magazine isn't really called *Evangelicalism Now*. And in the editorial "Blessed Is the Law—Up to a Point," the masthead wasn't attempting to justify cheating on one's taxes. They were arguing that, given today's circumstances, it is "legitimate (albeit regrettable) for an immigrant to enter this nation clandestinely to gain [certain] freedoms."

The circumstances listed are these: "economic and political hardship" and U.S. immigration policies that "make it nearly impossible for some immigrants to enter this nation." Given those circumstances, Americans should cut the lawbreakers some "slack."

Actually, more than that. "While we do not admire lawbreaking, we cannot help but admire people who go through great privation to attain the dream of economic and political liberty." So let us not only absolve them with amnesty but stand in awe of their sin.

Is it sin? Well, *sic et non*. "It is deeply regrettable that they have broken the laws of our land." But why regret it at all when it is nothing short of "deny[ing] the witness of Scripture" to say that there is never a time when we should obey God rather than men?

Certainly we should, and the biblical accounts provided by EN are perfect examples. The law told Daniel not to pray. The law told Rahab not to assist God's people. The law told Peter not to preach the Gospel. And Jesus is Himself the Sabbath.

Roman law told a convert named Onesimus that he was a slave—what some might call economic and political hardship. When Onesimus went on the lam, Saint Paul's response (written from jail) was to send him back to his master, Philemon. Paul encouraged Philemon to receive Onesimus as "more than a slave, as a dear brother," but he would remain a slave nonetheless. As a new Christian, Onesimus' calling was to abide by the law and sacrifice his liberty.

The trouble with twisted-Scripture immigration propaganda is that it almost always contains some genuine biblical truth. EN is right: Christians must "extend hospitality to the stranger and succor to the suffering." We have no right to be a jackass toward people of any station in life who cross our paths. Nor do we have a right to admire, if not absolve, otherwise law-abiding people for flouting just and reasonable laws because they only yearn to be free to mow our lawns.

In a completely unrelated matter, I wonder: Come next April 15, will the otherwise law-abiding illegal immigrants and their employers cheat on *their* taxes? ◆

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You Say Ásátru, I Say Shoresh

In these days of political correctness and multiculturalism, the surprising thing is that there was so little controversy when the board of School District 205 awarded a $40,000 contract to revisionist historian Michael Hoffman, author of *They Were White and They Were Slaves: The Untold History of the Enslavement of Whites in Early America* and *Judaism Discovered: A Study of the Anti-Biblical Religion of Racism, Self-Worship, Superstition and Deceit.*

Hoffman, who had once attacked that same board for firing a white principal who had changed the failing grades of white students, began volunteering his time last fall to mentor disadvantaged white students at a new charter school in the district. The superintendent was so impressed by his efforts that she drew up a contract for Hoffman's services that was slightly less than $10,000. (Any expenditure over $10,000 has to come before the board.)

Now that Hoffman was being paid, he could expand his program, which he called Ásátru, an Old Icelandic word that means (roughly) "those true to one's ancestors." District officials were so pleased by the results that they decided to offer Hoffman the $40,000 contract. Some critics raised objections that Ásátru is really a religious program in disguise, and even one with some rather unpleasant racial elements. Still, board president David Kelley, a former state chairman of the Libertarian Party of Illinois and its 1994 gubernatorial candidate, told the *Rockford Register Star* that the program is "a cost-effective attempt to reach students who might otherwise turn to crime."

A minor problem arose when it was revealed that Hoffman's Ásátru, Inc., was not incorporated with the state of Illinois. While the district insisted that Hoffman would need to file for incorporation, the school-board attorney told the *Register Star* that "the board won't have to wait for the state to approve the company's application."

And indeed, just a week later, the board voted unanimously to approve the contract, which runs from March 10 until June 30. Later this year, the board will consider expanding the program to a second school in the district.

If all of this seems a bit hard to believe, that's because I've changed a few of the details. There is no Ásátru, Inc.; Michael Hoffman does not have a contract with District 205 (nor should he); and he hasn't been mentoring white students and protesting the firing of a white principal.

In its essence, however, the story is true. On March 9, the school board voted unanimously to award a $40,000 contract to Shoresh, Inc. (*Shoresh*, the company's website notes, means "rooted"). The company's founder, Yahcolyah Muhammad, once demanded that the very same school board "Show respect for the black community and not remove our leaders," when the board fired Kenneth Jackson, the principal of Jefferson High School, for changing the failing grades of black students. Muhammad later volunteered his time to mentor black students at the district's Leadership and Learning Academy, which he parlayed into his paying gig.

And while Muhammad has never written any books, he is the founder and director of curriculum and instruction at Muhammad University of Islam, an organization associated with the Nation of Islam. Minister Yahcolyah is a fairly popular speaker at Nation of Islam events and runs an Islamic study group that brings other Nation of Islam luminaries to speak at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

One of those speakers, Ashashed Muhammad (no relation to Yahcolyah), came to the NIU campus on August 29, 2009, to hawk his book, *The Synagogue of Satan*, the Nation of Islam's equivalent of Hoffman's *Judaism Discovered*. (The Foreword to *The Synagogue of Satan* was written by Malik Zulu Shabazz, the national chairman of the New Black Panther Party.) Minister Yahcolyah's website for the Islamic study group includes a book list featuring such titles as *Our Saviour Has Arrived* by Elijah Muhammad ("Messenger of ALLAH"), *The Isis Papers* by Dr. Frances Cress Welsing ("This work is dedicated to the global system of white supremacy"), and the Nation of Islam's old chestnut, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews.*

While the *Register Star* reported on March 1 that Minister Yahcolyah's bio on the Shoresh website noted his role at the Muhammad University of Rockford, that line is now missing. I wonder why. It's not as if school-district officials or school-board members, or even the *Register Star* or any of the other Rockford media that covered the vote, saw any problem with Minister Yahcolyah's apparent racism and antisemitism.

In the fall, if Minister Yahcolyah finds that running programs at two schools is too much work, perhaps he can hire Michael Hoffman to help him out. Stranger things have happened—like the approval of this contract. ◆

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In Darkest London, Part 2

by R.J. Stove

This is the second part of a two-part article written by a white male Catholic convert, 48 years old, who has no specialist theological training whatsoever, is of strictly average intelligence, and represents no interest group or political movement. It derives solely from a recent visit to London, in which nothing spectacularly horrible occurred, and which was spent mostly among people neither very rich nor very poor.

IN PART 1 of this report (see *Correspondence*, May) I attempted to give some idea of the cultural, political, and moral squalor that has overtaken London since 1990. Here I endeavor to give an account of the two phenomena—two alone—that gave me hope for the city of which Dr. Johnson said, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life."

One was an exhibition at the National Gallery: "The Sacred Made Real," a collection of 17th-century Spanish religious art. If someone had told me fifteen or even five years ago that Londoners would flock to see some of the most hyper-realistic Crucifixion statues ever made, I would have laughed at the notion. But this very thing happened in my presence. Tickets were so scarce as to require 24 hours' advance notice for booking. The crowds bore no resemblance to those I had seen at the nearby National Portrait Gallery a day earlier. There, Americans and Chinese surrounded me. At the Spanish exhibition, the conversations were all in British accents or German.

Why are people in London viewing these terrifying artifacts at all? Is it, for them, the hip modern equivalent to Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*? The sheer nightmarishness of the paintings and sculptures precluded, surely, mere aesthetic interest. Do the viewers feel toward God on Golgotha the same panic that ultimately overcame Pinkie Brown, in *Brighton Rock*?

Nevertheless, the news reportage is extraordinary. At a preliminary viewing, journalists who had spent their entire adult lives publicly defending Mossad agents, merchant bankers, and masturbators were seen to weep. Adrian Searle, an atheist *Guardian* writer, wrote on October 19, "Full of great and terrible things, this is a marvelous and often disturbing exhibition. . . . I left devastated and deeply moved." The *Observer*'s Laura Cumming, also non-Christian, wrote six days later, "This is the most powerful show the National Gallery is ever likely to hold." Public-relations girls—whose cultural awareness had hitherto been confined to memorizing every episode of *Sex and the City*—were briefly exposed to the astonishing fact that once upon a time in a faraway galaxy lived a Man called Jesus Christ, and there had been people who believed in His death on a Cross without ever having been silenced by Christopher Hitchens. (Hang on—didn't some of these images resemble a Mel Gibson movie? Don't remember the title, but it had something to do with passion. No Sarah Jessica Parker in it, though, so it can't have been very important.)

THE OTHER SMALL SIGN of hope for London can be found, with great difficulty, once you leave the Marble Arch Underground station and turn to the right. Inlaid on a traffic island separating Bayswater Road from Edgware Road, there is a round plaque that marks the spot where once the Tyburn gallows stood. No policeman will admit to knowing where Tyburn Convent actually is, but the Muslim tour guide will tell you.

On the door to Tyburn Convent is a placard: "MOBILE PHONES MUST BE SWITCHED OFF BEFORE ENTERING THE CHAPEL." Even here, it seems, modernity must be warned against. Upon entering, you are suddenly overwhelmed by a vast silence, broken only by the occasional whine of ambulances outside.

Behind a white grille, a Tyburn sister kneels, reverently but impassively, before the Blessed Sacrament. There are two ladies in the pews, each of whom is saying the Rosary. And there is myself.

What happened to me, in the 20 minutes that I knelt there, I cannot profess to say. Perhaps I briefly went insane. Perhaps I only then appreciated for the first time what being a faithful Catholic means. Whatever the explanation for those 20 minutes, it was somehow as if St. Edmund Campion and all the other 104 Catholic martyrs of Tyburn were, in a strange way, actually present.

I guess it was the spirit of the place. The realization that on this very soil, Catholics like me were not worrying about how to get to the nearest Tube station or when the traffic light was going to change or whether they had all the documents for their forthcoming cross-Channel trip. They were worrying about how not to betray the Church when the hangman first plunged his knife into their bowels.

From a biography of Campion published in 1867:

> There was standing beside the block where Campion was being cut into quarters a young man named Henry Walpole: he was still a Protestant, and had gone merely to see. As the hang-

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> man was throwing the quarters into the caldron of boiling water a drop of the bloody mixture splashed out upon Walpole's clothes, who afterwards declared to Father Ignatius Basselier, S.J., that he at once felt he must be a Catholic. On his conversion he joined the Society [of Jesus], was ordained priest, and sent into England, where he was apprehended, and like Campion condemned and executed . . .

Suppose I had been Henry Walpole on that frightful December day in 1581, and suppose Campion's blood had splashed out upon my own clothes. Would I have had the courage to react as Walpole did?

My fear is that in the 16th century, sheer physical and moral cowardice could well have led me to do what I see so many otherwise intelligent and decent Englishmen and Englishwomen doing at present: in short, trying to reach a *modus vivendi* with Anglicanism. Those who behave thus in London today—when no threat of the scaffold, or even of lasting social ostracism, exists to keep them within the Established Church—would seem to believe that Anglicanism remains the same broadly Christian movement that once succored T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis. This, *naturellement*, raises the question: How incoherent, how femocratic, and how sexually perverse does England's contemporary Anglicanism—presided over by Canterbury's Rowan "Arch-Druid" Williams—have to become before these Londoners will have the courage to desert it?

During the 1950's and early 1960's, millions imagined that Britain's leading dramatist was John Osborne. In 1994 Osborne drank and drugged himself to death after no fewer than five marriages, the fourth to an actress (Jill Bennett) whose suicide he greeted with open pleasure, lamenting only that the funeral directors had inconsiderately deprived him of the chance to defecate on the eyes of her corpse.

These days he is largely and happily forgotten, though there exists a languid scholarly debate as to whether he or Bertolt Brecht was the more blatant and talentless liar. To the extent that Osborne is remembered at all, it is less for his once-touted plays—whose cretinous *proletkult* amateurism even the British left now admits—than for his putrid erotic life and his 1961 *cri de coeur*, this latter published in the cryptocommunist weekly *Tribune* under the title "A Letter to My Fellow Countrymen." Most of the document (written just after, and intended to justify, the building of the Berlin Wall) is of purely psychiatric significance, but the best-known passage from it possibly warrants quoting:

> There is murder in my brain [Osborne insisted], and I carry a knife in my heart for every one of you. [Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan, and you, [Opposition Leader Hugh] Gaitskell, you particularly. I wish we could hang you all out, with your dirty washing, on your damned Oder-Neisse Line, and those seven out of 10 Americans, too. I would willingly watch you all die for the West, if only I could keep my own minuscule portion of it, you could all go ahead and die for Berlin, for Democracy, to keep out the red hordes or whatever you like.
>
> You have instructed me in my hatred for 30 years. You have perfected it, and made it the blunt, obsolete instrument it is now. I only hope it will keep me going. I think it will. I think it may sustain me in the last few months.
>
> Till then, damn you, England. You're rotting now, and quite soon you'll disappear. My hate will outrun you yet, if only for a few seconds. I wish it could be eternal.

The Tyburn nuns offer England a very different message from Osborne's harangue. By their mere existence, they say, "Bless you, England. Bless you, and in the Name of the Crucified God, in the name of every Catholic exterminated by the Penal Laws, recover your soul."

R.J. Stove lives in Melbourne, Australia.

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Child Abuse, the State, and the Russian Family

by Wayne Allensworth

IT WAS ANOTHER EPISODE in a series of shocking crimes against children. Little Sasha, just three years old, was pulled from the frigid waters of the Pekhorka River in January 2009. He was bound to a car battery with adhesive tape, his body battered and bearing the marks of cigarette burns. It was the second death of an adopted child in the Grechushkin family: The December before Sasha's body was discovered, their one-year-old's death had aroused suspicions. The third child was placed in an orphanage, and the adoptive parents were arrested.

A more recent official outrage has stoked the flames of public anger and dismay regarding the treatment of children in Russia. In February the Internal Security department of the St. Petersburg militia opened an investigation of a pedophilia case involving a deputy in the city legislature and militia officers who may have covered for him and other pedophiliac officials. According to investigators, militia officers are accused of providing protection for United Russia Deputy Andrei Smirnov. Smirnov operates a children's home in the city and stands accused of molesting the boys in his care for over two decades. After being taken into police custody, Smirnov confessed his crimes and told the investigators shocking stories of orgies involving the boys and pedophiliac state officials. He provided pictures to confirm the details. According to press accounts, some of the boys were sent to Moscow, where they were reportedly involved in sexual activities with officials from the Emergencies Ministry. There were also claims that some boys were sent abroad over the years, suggesting that Smirnov and others were involved in an international pedophile ring.

These cases sparked a controversy over the role of the state and social services in dealing with children, and President Dmitri Medvedev's recently appointed ombudsman for children's rights, Pavel Astakhov, asserted that this latest case of abuse showed that Russia needed a juvenile-justice system, along with a social-services network that would intervene to protect children from dangerous situations. Juvenile-crime rates, children being abandoned by parents, and child-abuse/child-pornography cases that have attracted media attention have put the Russian government in an uncomfortable situation. On the one hand, the Russian Orthodox Church has denounced any plans to introduce a juvenile-justice system or child-protective services. The views of the ROC should be familiar to *Chronicles* readers: State intervention represents a threat to the integrity and autonomy of the family; it is a concept imported from the West that Russia does not need. On the other hand, Astakhov points out that layers of bureaucracy and a lack of proper legislation prevent the state from intervening and saving children in a situation like Sasha's. According to Astakhov, the law does not protect the interests of minors. In addition, from the age of 16, Russian teens are automatically treated as adults by the courts. A juvenile-justice system would separate underage prisoners from adults. Meanwhile, Russia has been experimenting with a system of juvenile courts, though the criminal code would have to be amended to institute such a system across the country. Adding to the authorities' discomfort is the fact that Russia is a signatory to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Social Charter, mandating protective services for children and a juvenile-justice system (though the provision for juvenile courts was removed from the version of the European Charter approved by the Duma last May).

The possibility of instituting intrusive protective services recalls painful memories from Russia's Soviet past, when the state (and the Party) claimed complete loyalty, even above family, and a host of bureaucrats "fulfilled the plan" at all costs. Vladimir Khomyakov and the Narodny Sobor movement oppose juvenile courts and protective services. Khomyakov has said that he fears social services would "collect complaints from children about their parents and will be able to take away children easily. Specialists will be employed just to ruin families; otherwise they would lose their jobs." The Russian bureaucracy has a notorious reputation for corruption, racketeering, and turning any official function into extortion. Members of Narodny Sobor and like-minded people across Russia are naturally wary.

Despite these sensible arguments, a sad fact remains: There is precious little of family life left in Russia.

The destruction of family life is the end result of a harrowing history of war, revolution, totalitarianism, corruption, and collapse; of atheism, a people's loss of self-confidence, and the common end of materialist ideologies—nihilism, our own social disintegration in the West magnified, intensified, and reflected in 21st-century Russia. Abortion, divorce, and the disintegration of family ties are common results of spiritual ailments in modern societies, but in Russia we can see the end game playing out: In a recent poll 32 percent of respondents stated that their attitude regarding Stalin could be described as "admiration," "respect," or "sympathy." According to the same poll,

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34 percent said that Stalinism's holocaust was, at least to some degree, justified by the regime's achievements (especially victory in the "Great Patriotic War"), and 50 percent rejected the description of Stalin as a "criminal." The Great Teacher and Generalissimo consistently turns up on lists of admired leaders, and Moscow authorities—not without controversy—are planning to place posters of the Soviet dictator around the capital as part of this spring's Victory Day celebration. Stalin's shadow hangs heavy over Russia today.

In the Stalinist Soviet Union, the state gave, and the state took away. It was perhaps inevitable that the Bolsheviks, faced with the possibility of another European war and a backward, peasant-dominated country, would embark on a course of forced modernization and state building, simultaneously making Stalin the chief proponent of what many American conservatives would call "family values" and the agent of the destruction of Russian families on a vast scale. Indeed, in some respects, Comrade Stalin seems to have been to the right of our present-day American liberals—and many self-styled conservatives—in his support of the family and traditional values. Under Stalin, the Soviet state frowned on abortion and divorce, supported pro-natalist campaigns to increase the population, and reversed radical Bolshevik progressive-education practices in favor of discipline in the schools. Patriotism was brought back (in a Sovietized form), as was, on a limited and controlled basis, the Church. In official propaganda, Stalin was portrayed as the Father of the Peoples, an image that outlived the dictator. His death in 1953 was viewed by many in the Soviet Union as a national catastrophe. The poet Joseph Brodsky, then 13, once recalled being told of Stalin's death at school. His teacher ordered the entire class to get down on their knees to receive the dreaded news. Later, some 500 people were trampled to death in Moscow as a vast crowd rushed to pay their respects to the Great Strategist.

The flip side of Stalinist modernization was forced labor and the demand for absolute loyalty. (For the story of Stalin's assault on the families of his own courtiers, see Simon Montefiore's *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*.) In his monumental *Gulag Archipelago*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn told the tale of families destroyed by the regime's need for slave labor amid the hunt for "enemies of the people." The masses of orphans of war and revolution were swept into the camps, and the numbers swelled as a result of parents' execution, or, during the war, death at the front. As the number of victims mounted during Stalin's collectivization and mass terror, swarms of orphans covered the country, and the "Best Friend of Children" authorized that, from the age of 12, they were to be treated as adults by the Soviet Criminal Code. In the camps, they faced sexual abuse and all the agonies of camp life. In the Gulag, the children, as Solzhenitsyn wrote, "saw the world as it is seen by quadrupeds: Only might makes right! Only the beast of prey has the right to live!"

Following the death of the great dictator, the regime's "de-Stalinization" program included freeing large numbers of prisoners from the Gulag, the end of mass terror, and relaxing Stalin-era social policies, particularly those regarding divorce and abortion, changes that survived "re-Stalinization" under Brezhnev. Abortion became a common practice, a casual means of contraception. The demographic hole dug by revolution, mass terror, and war was set to be dug deeper by modern pragmatism, nihilism, and a Russian fatalism magnified by the Soviet experience. Declining birthrates and "demographic winter" are commonplace in modern societies, but the alarming trends in Russia have been the subject of handwringing there and of study by Western demographers, who are often shocked and amazed by what they see. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union the pathologies of the West have been magnified and seemingly accelerated in Russia, including low birthrates, alcoholism, drug addiction, and suicide. To this Russia adds a mortality rate that is 135 percent higher than Western Europe's (according to 2006 figures) and a life expectancy that is low, especially for a developed country.

One of these trends is what Nicholas Eberstadt called "the withering away" of the Russian family ("Drunken Nation: Russia's Depopulation Bomb," *World Affairs Journal*, Spring 2009). Many Russian women are opting to have only one child. At the same time, divorce, illegitimacy, and cohabitation are rapidly increasing. By the mid-90's, barely one third of Russian women were getting married and staying in that same marriage by age 50. And what of the children?

> According to prevailing tenets of Western economic thought, a decline in fertility—to the extent that it occurs under conditions of orderly progress, and as a consequence of parental volition—should mean a better material environment for newborns and children because a shift to smaller desired family size, all else being equal, signifies an increase in parents' expected commitments to each child's education, nutrition, health care, and the like.

But, as Eberstadt writes, that is not the case:

> [I]n post-Communist Russia, there are unambiguous indications of a worsening of social well-being for a significant proportion of the country's children—in effect, a disinvestment in children in the face of a pronounced downward shift in national fertility patterns.
>
> School enrollment is sharp-

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ly lower for primary-school-age children—99 percent in 1991 versus 91 percent in 2004. And the number of abandoned children is sharply higher. According to official statistics, as of 2004 over 400,000 Russian children below 18 years of age were in "residential care." This means that roughly 1 child in 70 was in a children's home, orphanage, or state boarding school. Russia is also home to a large and possibly growing contingent of street children whose numbers could well exceed those under institutional care. According to Human Rights Watch, over 100,000 children in Russia have been abandoned by their parents each year since 1996. If accurate, this number, compared to the annual tally of births for the Russian Federation, which averaged about 1.4 million a year for the 1996–2007 period, would suggest that in excess of 7 percent of Russia's children are being discarded by their parents in this new era of steep sub-replacement fertility.

It is worth recalling that the trends described by Eberstadt have played out in an era of relative prosperity, in a Russia buoyed by huge amounts of petrodollars. According to official statistics, *per capita* incomes doubled between 1998 and 2007.

Russians wary of more state intrusion command the sympathy of social conservatives in the West, but people of good will, and with no vested interest in expanding the state bureaucracy, can be excused for wanting to do something, anything, to ameliorate the dire situation of Russia's children. The actions of the state in various forms have helped bring on a situation in which anything like a normal family life is receding into the recesses of collective memory, and little but the state remains to deal with the destruction. Social conservatives in Russia are faced with a much larger task than simply resisting another intrusive state program: They must find ways to bolster the Christian Faith and to begin to rebuild the people's understanding of marriage and family.

Will we learn anything from this?

Corresponding editor Wayne Allensworth is the author of The Russia Question.

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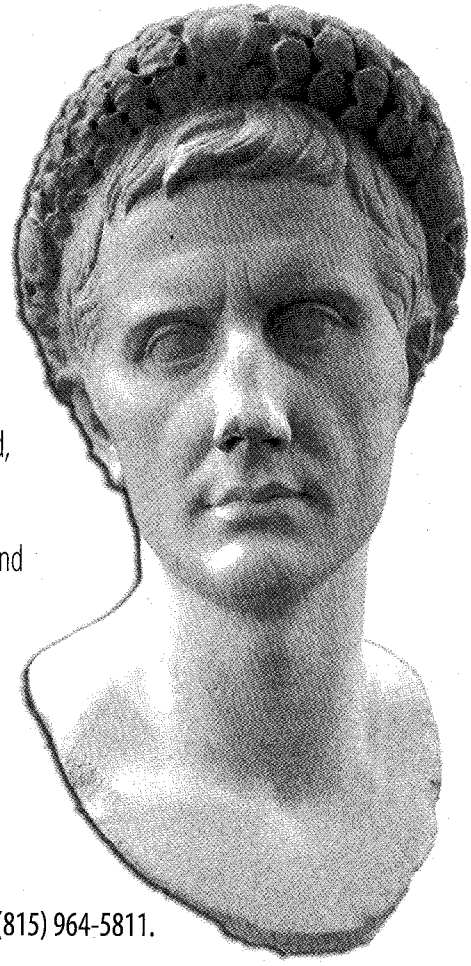

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Katyn 2

When, in 1934, Stalin had a Leningrad party boss killed—and then wept at the man's funeral, railing at the enemies of Russia—a uniquely modern phenomenon, which I shall call state vendetta, was born. State vendetta is somewhere between conventional warfare and mafia violence. Where the narrow aim of the former is to suppress a specific enemy, and the indiscriminate aim of the latter is to terrorize all rivals, state vendetta is closer to ritual assassination. Blending secrecy with rumor, death with propaganda, the totalitarian chieftain or oligarchic group aims above all to manipulate public opinion, terrifying the populace into submission. The elimination of a specific opponent is never the issue.

In this sense the assassination of John F. Kennedy by person or persons unknown was a counterpart to the assassination of Sergei Kirov by the secret police. In both cases the identity of the victim was not the issue. In both cases a majority of the population knew that the official version of the crime was untrue, but to say so in the former case was to risk death and to say so in the latter was to risk social ostracism. More recently, circumstances surrounding the events of September 11, 2001, have been interpreted by a majority of the population in ways that differ markedly from the official version, yet the fear of being branded a conspiracy monger effectively deters the average citizen from delving too deeply into the controversy. This is precisely the sort of emasculation of public opinion that state vendetta aims to achieve.

These reflections have been occasioned by the airplane crash over Smolensk, in which leaders of the Polish party favoring the dislocation of American ABM systems in Eastern Europe have perished. I have been monitoring the reaction of the public on *Snob.ru*, the Russian "oligarch club" *cum* news and entertainment portal, to which I contribute a weekly column. The dissent from the official version of the crash as pilot error has been limited to *cui bono* questions, to highlighting inconsistencies in the official story, and to pointing out the incongruousness of Putin's becoming the head of the investigating commission.

The dissenters were missing the point. If the crash was brought about on purpose, which none of us will be able to claim with any degree of certainty for another hundred years, then the whole point of it would have been state vendetta, signaling to the political decisionmakers of all Eastern European countries that the Kremlin is not averse to committing crimes in the open in order to have its way.

As President Kaczynski's plane had been bound for ceremonies commemorating Stalin's secret crime at Katyn, where tens of thousands of Polish officers were slaughtered on Stalin's orders and the slaughter pinned on the Nazis, inevitably the crash acquired the name Katyn 2. Other parallels have been drawn, notably with the 1943 crash over Gibraltar of the plane bearing the head of the Polish government-in-exile, Sikorski, widely believed to have been the work of Stalin's secret police.

These parallels are misleading. The Polish officers were slaughtered in absolute secrecy, and it was not until 1951, when Józef Mackiewicz published *The Katyn Wood Murders* and was subsequently called to testify before the U.S. Congress in the dual capacity of witness and expert, that even the Poles suspected Stalin of the crime. Similarly, the assassination of Sikorski by Stalin's agents was the secret elimination of an individual opponent, and all traces leading to Stalin were carefully camouflaged. I have been told that the files relating to the affair, scheduled to be made public in 1993, were sealed in Britain for another 50 years during the thaw in relations with Russia under Thatcher.

By contrast, the crash of President Kaczynski's plane had all the hallmarks of state vendetta. Putin's advisors from the state security establishment could not have not known and not understood that in the circumstances he would be thought by many in Poland to have engineered the catastrophe, yet instead of creating a fiction of an ostensibly independent inquiry, Putin had himself appointed head of the commission. It is as though the Russian state wanted to say of Eastern Europe, "People over there will talk? So much the better!"

The parallel with Katyn is accurate in one respect. The history of the 20th, and now the 21st, century is shaping up as the history of conspiracy. Not surprisingly so, as in this era principally new players, totalitarian regimes, appeared on the world stage and began acting their parts side by side with established actors. As the play unfolded, not only did the brash newcomers learn statecraft and stagecraft from those experienced old hands, they taught the old dogs some new tricks. Given such symbiosis, any observer of the epoch who is not a conspiracy theorist is not deserving of the name of historian, while any citizen of democracy who is afraid to read his books is not deserving of the name of citizen. ◆

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Philip Jenkins

Designed to Fail

OVER THE PAST YEAR, American elites have spent a vast amount of time discussing proposed reforms in healthcare, arguing about the social and financial costs of producing an apparent social good. In March, Congress approved a law that many observers see as a potential catastrophe, in terms of its devastating effects on our economic future, the growth of national indebtedness, and the long-term impact on the liberty of families and individuals. ObamaCare is a very bad policy indeed, so atrocious that the obvious question arises as to why any reasonable person would have supported it. Of course, we should never underestimate the power of human stupidity, but a larger and subtler agenda is at work here. Healthcare reform actually offers an excellent case study of a principle that is all too familiar to students of crime and justice: It is designed to fail.

The concept of "designed to fail" was formulated back in 1979 in an influential study by leftist scholar Jeffrey Reiman entitled *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison*. Following Marxist theory, Reiman argued that the goal of the criminal-justice system was not to suppress crime but to promote and sustain acceptable levels of social misbehavior, with the aim of enhancing the power and resources of official agencies. Crime, in short, is useful, even essential, for the preservation of state power. Reiman was not postulating a conspiracy theory but exploring the dynamics of agencies charged with tasks that were literally impossible. Yet rather than being discredited or disheartened by their failures, agencies stood to benefit mightily from them and actively sought out still more absurdly quixotic challenges. They were in a no-lose situation.

Take, for instance, the drug war that has staggered on for some 40 years now. Nobody seriously believes that even the harshest criminal-justice response will eliminate illicit drug use, as opposed to merely relocating the most obvious centers of trafficking and use. Hence, the statistics used to measure the Drug Problem remain stubbornly high, forcing ever-larger infusions of public funds and ever-harsher penalties. The beneficiaries are state and federal policing agencies, the prison bureaucracies, and aggressive prosecutors and legislators intent on reducing the civil liberties and property rights of the mainstream noncriminal population. If, by chance, one particular demon drug ever does fade in popularity, justice agencies scramble almost comically to identify some new chemical that can be identified as "the next crack cocaine," which will in its turn prove an insuperable social menace. And those new funds and powers keep pouring in.

OBAMACARE HAS FAILURE built in at multiple points. From its first years of implementation, it places restrictions and demands on private insurance companies that simply cannot be accommodated if those firms are to survive as profit-making enterprises. In case you didn't notice, all the actuarial assumptions that have kept the insurance system afloat for some 300 years just got repealed. Most glaringly, insurance depends on maintaining a balance between those who pay for the system without using it and those who actually make claims. That rule no longer applies. Remember all those uninsured people who are required to buy health insurance? The experience of Massachusetts' comparable law shows that most won't obey this requirement unless and until they face some horrendously costly procedure.

In response, private insurance firms will be forced to jack up premiums across the board, which may or may not stave off bankruptcy. Within a few years, the private insurance system will have reached such a desperate condition that politicians and the media will declare a national crisis. Facing the total failure of the healthcare system, the federal government will be *forced* to introduce a single-payer national healthcare system on European lines. As some hack will undoubtedly proclaim, nobody could have foreseen this back in the naive innocence of 2010, but unfortunately, government has to step in to make up for the failures of private enterprise.

Once that system is in place, the dreadful experience of Britain's national healthcare system demonstrates what awaits us. Hospitals and medical services will be overwhelmed but will have inadequate resources, leading to grim, unsanitary conditions and severe rationing of services, punctuated by sporadic scandals.

Political debate will then focus on the endless demands of the system for new resources and new taxes to pay for them, which can never be sufficient to reverse the cycle of decline. What resources do become available will fund the vast new bureaucracies of the medical-political complex. The more egregiously the system fails, the louder the left demands more intervention and more public funding, and an ever-larger state mechanism. Failure is a terrible thing to waste. ♦

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A Few Simple Queries

If I could ask our young President a few questions, they would run something like this: "At what point would you say, 'There. We finally have as much government as we need. To give it any more power would be tyrannous and would diminish our God-given rights'? I sense that you have never asked yourself this question. But if not, on what principle do you base your belief that government should, for instance, forbid all discrimination against transgendered Americans? And by the way, should the government also ban discrimination against pedophiliac and necrophilic Americans?"

Of course a politician isn't usually the best guy to go to in search of principle. But Obama likes to pose as a politician of principle—a pol above politics—so he invites it.

I might also ask him, "Has your ideal government ever existed in the real world? Or has any philosopher—Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Marx—ever described it? Is your ideal even possible, or is it merely a daydream?"

As our first black president, Obama has also become a hero to millions of black Americans. Don't they know that in order to get his party's nomination he had to support legal abortion?

Have they reflected on this? In the abstract, abortion is said to be a woman's free choice. But in the real world abortion often means white doctors killing the babies of young black women, poor and discarded, who have very little choice. So the net result of Obama's presidency may be a reduction of the black American population. And as a friend of mine pointed out to me the other day, the recent huge influx of immigrants, legal and illegal, is one result of the need for labor after the tens of millions of abortions of the last few decades. We have destroyed our natural work force and replaced it with foreigners.

Remember the "population explosion" of which the experts used to warn us? Well, it's coming to pass—everywhere but in the white countries, which are rapidly ceasing to be white.

Like many progressive-minded people, Obama is afflicted by an ignorant contempt for the past and an equally vacuous faith in the future. He will learn how pitiless reality is to our most seductive daydreams. Right now he could use a good dose of the realism of Louisiana politics. When an aide to Gov. Earl Long told him, "I'm with you when you're right, Governor, but not when you're wrong," Long roared back, "You stupid sonofabitch, I don't need you when I'm right!" (Which reminds me of another great line, this one from Sir Boyle Roche: "Half the lies our enemies tell about us aren't true!")

But I will say one thing in Obama's favor: At least he isn't George W. Bush. I'll have to keep reminding myself of that wanly cheering fact for the next two and a half years.

The best way to get rid of corruption in high places, it has been said, is to get rid of high places. That is the American political genius in a nutshell. But the liberal instinct always demands that power be concentrated and centralized.

The most obvious lesson of socialism still hasn't sunk in. Man may be a rational animal, but he's a mighty slow learner.

At any rate, the Obama craze seems to have ended already. Pity. Michelle Obama, whatever her faults, remains the only First Lady to have tackled the problem of childhood obesity. And she has never been reported or even rumored to have hurled lamps or ashtrays at her husband. Yet even this President's most Bolshevik partisans no longer seem eager to carve his face into Mount Rushmore.

The American presidency has swollen to such gigantic proportions that no man can meet its demands; hence the need for innumerable appointments and bureaucracies. And who knows when all human calculations may suddenly be upset by, say, a volcano in Iceland. Could anyone on earth have foreseen that? (I'll be the first to admit that it caught me flat-footed. My horoscope that day didn't even hint at it.)

So we should beware of blaming Obama for all the world's woes. He may aggravate them, but he doesn't cause them. Still, as they say, if you claim credit for the sunshine, you can expect to be blamed for the rain.

In the sort of hackneyed phrase that wows his admirers, Obama recently opined that "we can disagree without being disagreeable." What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed. ◆

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The Bishops' Quest for Amnesty

by Christopher Manion

In January, when the Catholic Church in the United States was supposedly devoting all of Her efforts to preventing taxpayer funding of abortion in ObamaCare, America's Catholic bishops took a distracting detour, announcing a nationwide "Justice for Immigrants" campaign. Their goal: to distribute millions of postcards to parishes throughout the country so Catholics could demand that Congress "enact immigration reform as soon as possible." Two months later, the bishops expressed shock and chagrin when ObamaCare passed with abortion funding intact. But one leading prelate, Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, revealed the bishops' real priorities. Summarizing an interview with him, Catholic News Services writes,

> Now that a health care bill will help millions of uninsured people receive affordable medical care, . . . it's time for the government to address the millions of people who are living in the shadows because they lack legal immigration status.

Mahony's candor reflects an infection in America's Catholic Church that has been festering for decades. Catholic bishops are charged with proclaiming and defending the timeless teachings of the Church on faith and morals. Even those who disagree are not surprised when the Church teaches that abortion is an intrinsic evil. After all, the bishops must faithfully preserve and defend 2,000 years of teaching and tradition.

That is a full-time job, so the Church insists that those political and social issues on which good and faithful Catholics can disagree should be left to the laity. In recent decades, however, America's bishops have become a national lobbying force that routinely weighs in on issues ranging from inflation, welfare, taxes, and socialized medicine to the price of tomatoes in Florida. Amnesty for illegal aliens fits right in with an agenda that has become increasingly partisan, radical, and secular. This unseemly development mystifies not only Catholics but many other Americans who wish the Church well. Setting aside the question of the merits of amnesty, how and why do the bishops so ardently support it?

According to Francis Cardinal George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the bishops' agenda is "moral, not political." This past April, he explained what that means: "Justice without love is destructive, as Marxist societies, founded on equality and social justice alone, teach the world."

The term *social justice* (*socialis iustitiae*), relatively new to Catholic theology, was first employed by Pius XI in 1931. The left quickly hijacked it to confer upon its socialist agenda a bogus Christian character. Finally, after 80 years of this chicanery, a leading Catholic bishop in the United States has admitted that, in its current and almost universal use, *social justice* is Marxist.

And that poses a problem, because the Church is not Marxist. In fact, She has repeatedly condemned Marxism because it is materialistic and denies human nature altogether. Marxism denies metaphysics and the transcendent. It denies Christ as the Lord of history because it reduces history to an endless, world-immanent class struggle. It denies Christ as Savior because that role belongs to the party. Yet Cardinal George apparently believes that, with a dose of love, Marxist "social justice" will produce a truly Christian society. How a government can love—especially our current secular, virulently anti-Catholic one—he does not say. But Marxism thrives on contradiction, and so does Cardinal George's USCCB. Nor is this anything new: The bishops' 1979 "Pastoral Letter On Racism" blamed the evil of racism not on the human heart but on "racial injustices in society and its own structures." So it is structures, not hearts, that must be changed. This intoxicating Marxist aroma has permeated the entire social-justice movement of left-wing Catholicism for years.

Clericalism, an age-old error constantly condemned by the Church, also plays a role. Like the layman, the bishop has the right to hold private political opinions on issues about which good Catholics (and bishops) can disagree. The problem arises when a bishop attempts to elevate his particular personal opinion to the level of Church teaching. This constitutes an abuse of the prelate's authority and confuses not only the faithful but the public. The practice has also diluted the genuine authority of the Church to the point that most bishops are afraid to exercise it—as though they had lost the authority to teach anything at all.

It is especially distressing to see politicized bishops cloak their agenda in religious language, as though no good Catholic—or good person—could possibly disagree. Countless bishops have echoed Cardinal Mahony's thinly veiled canard that amnesty opponents are immoral. In July 2008, he told an immigration rally that enforcement of current law was "fanning the flames of intolerance, xenophobia and, at times, bigotry." I can find no record of Cardinal Mahony—or any other bishop or USCCB official, for that matter—condemning the blatant racism of La Raza ("The Race"), a pro-amnesty agitation machine that is very powerful in Mahony's own archdiocese. Such

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self-serving moral posturing ill serves—and even perverts—the Church's mission to "go and teach all nations"; it scandalizes good Catholics; and it is thoroughly lacking in charity.

But it pleases the left on Capitol Hill.

As staff director for the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I worked with Chris Dodd, John Kerry, and Joe Biden for years. These men—all pro-abortion Catholics—would be hiding under their desks instead of brazenly flaunting their "Catholicism" in the face of the hierarchy, if the bishops acted like *bishops*.

Instead, the bishops are their lapdogs. Why? Over the past century, America's Catholic bishops have largely identified the Church with the Democratic Party. When Pope Benedict XV attempted to bring an early end to World War I, America's leading prelate, James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, supported President Wilson. In 1917, he admonished Americans to embrace "obedience and devotion to our country"—meaning Wilson's government and Wilson's war.

The alliance of the American Catholic hierarchy with the Democratic Party took a great leap forward during the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, when the Rev. John R. Ryan, a key advocate of "social justice" in the bishops' conference, so zealously supported FDR that people called him Monsignor New Deal. Since then, many bishops have continued to move left with the Democrats, becoming cheerleaders for a host of left-wing causes. While they constantly advocate higher spending, inflation, and taxes in program after program, they never bring up such unpleasant topics as "Thou shalt not steal."

Moreover, like most Catholics their age—myself included—the vast majority of today's American bishops grew up in Democratic families. They have stayed with the Democrats despite the party's pro-abortion, leftward momentum. And they effortlessly translate their political prejudices into Catholic "morality" at every opportunity.

That faux morality has become radicalized as the Democrats have, and it has also become quite selective: While our bishops beat the drum for left-wing political agendas, they ignore vital moral absolutes that are every bishop's consecrated duty to defend. Opposing abortion would seem to be obvious, but not for Cardinal Mahony. When asked last fall whether he thought that the healthcare bill funded abortion, he replied, "This is way beyond my field. My field is immigration." Does that sound like a prince of the Church or like a Senate staffer?

A bishop weakened by the abuse scandals might feel mighty uncomfortable condemning the scandalous Catholic politicians who publicly flaunt their support for abortion.

The bishop's responsibilities go far beyond opposing abortion. He is obligated to defend truths that are even more unpopular. One of those authoritative moral teachings defines artificial contraception as an intrinsic evil, right up there with abortion. Yet, while bishops busily enlist millions of Catholics to lobby for amnesty, I have yet to see them demand that Congress oppose the billions of taxpayer dollars that support contraceptive programs designed to reduce Third World populations (many of them Catholic) in the name of "development." Why the silence?

Then, of course, there's the money. Under Lyndon Johnson, Catholic universities quickly declared independence from the Vatican so they could get the newly available Omnibus Education funding. Catholic Charities, USA, soon followed suit and now receives over two billion dollars per year from the taxpayer. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, Cardinal George's predecessor and Barack Obama's favorite Catholic bishop, carefully transformed the USCCB into one of the most powerful liberal lobbies in Washington. Ever since, with donations from the pews declining, Bernardin and his successors have turned to the government for financing. Today, Catholic charities, universities, schools, and hospitals receive more from the government than ever before—billions of dollars each year. Politicians in Washington naturally expect the beneficiaries of their largesse to respond accordingly. Alas, the bishops have.

The USCCB bureaucracy includes a sizeable crew of committed leftists with a sordid history of passing out millions of the faithful's donations to radical groups and causes. Advertising themselves as "experts," they have bamboozled the bishops for years and have often caused scandals of their own. After an especially vile instance, when Richmond (Virginia) Catholic Charities employees actually procured an abortion for a minor under their care, USCCB leaders were forced to admit—to no one's surprise—that their staff "experts" were unfamiliar with even the basic tenets of Catholic moral teaching.

The clerical sex-abuse scandal has also taken a heavy toll. When it erupted in 2002, the only bishops willing to quit were those directly involved in abuse or blackmail. Although a tiny percentage of priests were abusers, over 100 bishops who had protected them insisted on staying on. Their prolonged state of denial has exacerbated further the greatest scandal in the history of the American Catholic Church, yet many

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guilty prelates still refuse to retire, no matter how deeply involved they were.

A bishop weakened by the abuse scandals might feel mighty uncomfortable condemning the scandalous Catholic politicians who publicly flaunt their support for abortion. Could it be that these Catholic politicians—including Biden, Pelosi, Durbin, Leahy, the Kennedys, Kerry, and countless others—might shut off the water and stop funding the bishops if they did their job?

In 2007, Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Catholic, sent a shot across the bow of any bishop who might be thinking of barring him from Communion. Asked what he thought of the prospect of being denied the Eucharist, he exploded: "I've always thought also that those bishops and archbishops who for decades hid pederasts and are now being protected by the Vatican should be indicted," he told a Capitol Hill newspaper. No wonder so many of our bishops have chosen to remain silent. The mere prospect of a subpoena from the chairman of the Judiciary Committee is enough to chill the spine of any bishop who still has one.

That's the big picture—but the particulars of the immigration issue also influence the bishops to attenuate their traditional teaching role. Consider the numbers: As the bishops moved left, a lot of the people in the pews moved out. A recent comprehensive study by the Pew Charitable Trust reveals that fully ten percent of Americans—over 30 million—are *ex*-Catholics. Will the bishops concentrate their efforts on drawing them back—or on replacing them?

The USCCB appears to have chosen the latter route. Even though Pope Benedict XVI said in April that the "fundamental solution" to immigration lies in "offering citizens work and a future in their land of origin," American prelates support keeping the illegals here, giving them a "path to citizenship," and eventually reuniting then with their families—*here*, not in their home countries.

I have never encountered a USCCB document that addresses the danger that amnesty would permanently import to our country tens of millions of people who have been raised to survive in a culture of corruption in countless countries overseas. For decades, the bishops have supported the expansion of an increasingly secular, power-hungry government in virtually every sphere—except abortion—ignoring the sad likelihood that tens of millions of new Hispanic voters will ensure the domination of the pro-abortion junta in Washington for generations to come.

The Pew study reports that about one third of all Catholics in the United States are now Latinos, and two thirds of Latinos are Catholics. And U.S. census figures indicate that Hispanics are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. (There are over six times as many Hispanics under 18 as there are over 65.) With amnesty, that percentage will increase—rapidly.

Pew reports that most Catholic Latinos are Democrats. Most illegals are also poor, and the bishops love the poor; for years they have advocated mandatory "government charity"—financed by higher taxes—to support them. So the pro-amnesty bishops, seeing the writing on the wall, might welcome it, even though it will result in a different Church and a different country.

How do bishops view the country they have? They teach that it is structurally racist. It has aborted 50 million babies since *Roe* v. *Wade*. America's wealthy (the minority who pay federal taxes) selfishly oppose the bishops' leftist agenda. So, too, do the people still in the pews, according to a recent Zogby poll. The faithful, burdened by higher taxes, don't donate as much as they used to. And the laity were mad as hell and gave the bishops grief because of their cover-up of the abuse scandals.

According to the World Bank, there are 2.2 billion people in the world who live on less than two dollars per day. How many of them do the bishops want to let in?

Christopher Manion is a columnist for the Wanderer.

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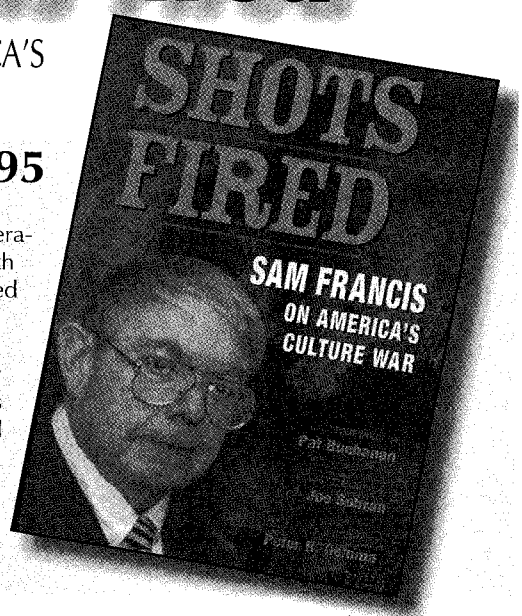

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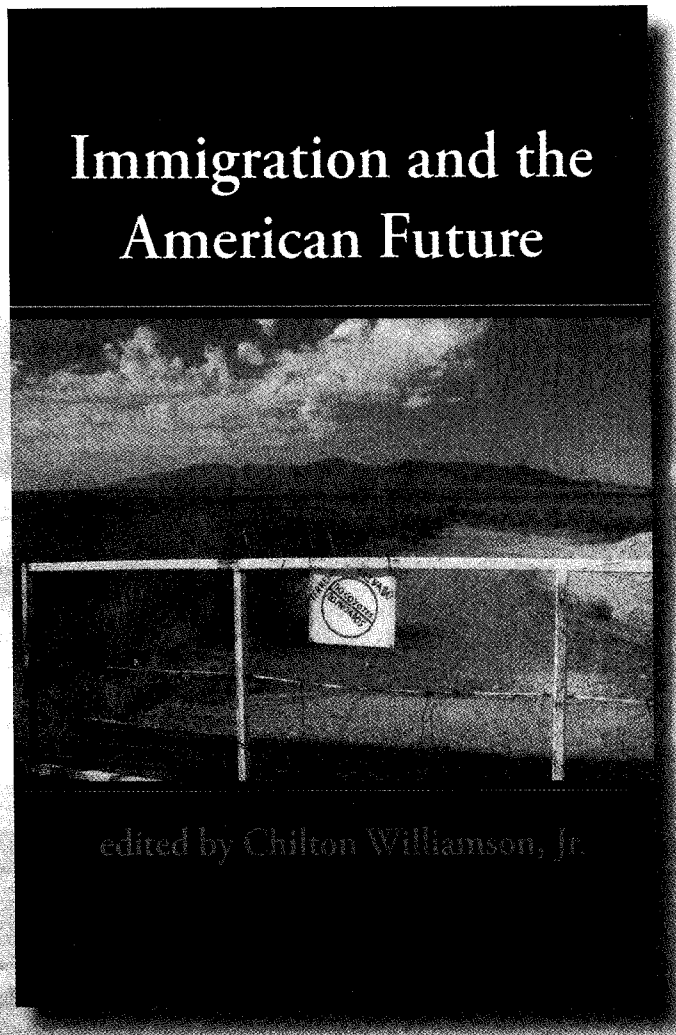

IMMIGRATION AND THE American FUTURE

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We Did It to Ourselves

by Sean Scallon

In June 2009, Alberta's former minister of finance Iris Evans commented to the Economic Club of Canada in Toronto that, "when you're raising children, you don't both go off to work and leave them for somebody else to raise." Essentially, Mrs. Evans suggested that parents might need to sacrifice financial well-being for stable families.

Needless to say, her fellow Alberta Tories ran for cover. Premier Ed Stelmach responded, "We have a tremendous respect for working families—both parents working contributes greatly to the province of Alberta and to the country of Canada." Evans herself tried to hide from her remarks, saying in her *mea culpa*, "But it was never with the intent to slam parenting as people do when they have children in alternative care or in daycare." Yet how could it not have been her intent? It is theoretically possible that she was speaking only of those well-off families who could afford to have one breadwinner (presumably male) in the family, but it's doubtful that women in many such households would suddenly give up their lucrative careers in law, finance, government, or management for that of housewife.

If many leftists are asking the broad mass of the citizenry to sacrifice some prosperity for the good of the environment, it is also the case that many rightists have asked for sacrifices in the name of the family. Unfortunately, not too many have been willing to make such sacrifices, even if they thought it ideal. As one parent from Calgary said in a CBC story on the Evans brouhaha, "If you can stay at home with your children then you should really, but I also think she needs to see it from the other point of view that actually for a lot of parents it's just not an option."

Indeed, that was the case even before the severe recession hit in the fall of 2007. It's not an option because economic policies pursued by conservative governments like that of Mrs. Evans have done much to undermine the people they claim to represent.

In the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Europe, the success of post-World War II political parties on the right largely followed their transformation from being parties exclusively for the rich, the reactionary and landed elite, and the business class into parties that could embrace a broader middle class and even the working class. Inflation pushed many voters toward such parties, and the parties, in turn, kept their promise to do something about it.

Cutting taxes, reducing government expenditures, and breaking up industrial trade unions helped to bring down the rate of inflation during the 1980's and 90's. The ending of the Cold War kept the economic boom alive by reducing arms expenditures. But within the period of great economic growth (1981 to 2008) other factors, trends, and migrations began to emerge that would ultimately undermine parties of the right by wrecking the majorities they had created.

The working classes lost jobs thanks to free-trade policies and new technologies that turned the world into one big marketplace. The underlying ideology of the age seemed to be "the cheaper, the better." Thus, high-paying manufacturing jobs were shipped to other lands, undercut by foreign competition, or eliminated altogether. Something similar happened in agriculture, as the drive for low prices forced many from the land, and new technologies produced more bountiful harvests from fewer acres and with fewer harvesting them.

Prices did drop for commodities or Chinese-made hardware items. However, inflation in two major areas—education and healthcare—forced many families to have two breadwinners, giving rise to the daycare industry.

The industries that boomed from 1981 to 2008—whether in finance, computer technology and engineering, or healthcare—required a university- or post-secondary-trained workforce. A high-school diploma simply wouldn't do anymore. More young people went to college, and college costs rose thanks to increased demand. Healthcare costs took off because two generations lived longer with the help of new medical technologies and because of the dramatic increase in specialized care. Litigation contributed to soaring insurance costs. The economic boom enticed Third World immigrants to come and get their share of the prosperity, if not the largesse of the welfare state.

Both libertarians and conservatives fail to understand how intertwined culture and economics are. Yes, religion plays a role. Yes, family structure plays a role. Yes, language and history play roles, too. But what makes up the foundation of many cultures is what people do for a living. The way people dress, where they live and what songs they sing, what they do on a Saturday night, and their outlook on life—all are a reflection of people's work, whether they are farmers, fishermen, miners, lumberjacks, pioneers, or roughnecks. Frontiersman Daniel Boone may have blazed the trail through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, but he was followed by the Scots-Irish and their hardscrabble farms, and then by coal companies, burrowing their mines into the mountains. By the 1950's, the ballads of earlier generations could be heard in Merle Travis's "Sixteen Tons," and country music regularly treated themes of working men and

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their jobs.

When work changes, culture follows. Going from a mine or an auto factory to an office cubicle is like traveling to another planet. Certainly, the generational ties of farmers, ranchers, steelworkers, and automakers were broken as their children went to college and then off to a job in a glass tower downtown. What choice did they have? Their parents' and grandparents' jobs were gone.

Mrs. Evans and many rightists like her do not understand, and perhaps have never understood, how the economic policies they enact make it difficult or even impossible to create the kind of societies they claim they wish to see. Such policies have made two wage-earners in a family a means not of luxury but of survival. An economy whose growth is based on consumer spending needs consumers with enough income to spend.

The lack of single-earner families has also had an effect on politics. In 2008, GOP presidential candidate John McCain only earned 50.7 percent of the vote in Orange County, California, the lowest percentage for a Republican candidate in a two-person race in that county since 1936. In 1984, Ronald Reagan won Orange County with 74.7 percent of the vote. The former base of the post-World War II conservative movement, with all its one-breadwinner families working in the defense and aerospace industries and in military installations, has largely vanished—along with its white majority. The loss of working- and middle-class jobs coincides with nonstop mass immigration, transforming the political makeup of the county. The same has happened in the industrial Midwestern and Mid-Atlantic states. Deindustrialization destroyed the dreams of men like Pat Buchanan who believed a grand conservative coalition comprising the ethnic working and middle classes in states stretching from New York to Minnesota, along with the Sunbelt, would be the majority party for ages. Today, the only middle-class jobs in such places are in the public sector, hardly the base upon which to build an antigovernment coalition.

Economic policy cannot be made in the abstract, apart from culture and politics. Any new rightist or conservative political coalition has to be forged in the economic policies it wishes to promote. The right of yesteryear did not realize this and watched its majority leave of its own accord.

Sean Scallon is a freelance writer, journalist, and author who lives in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.

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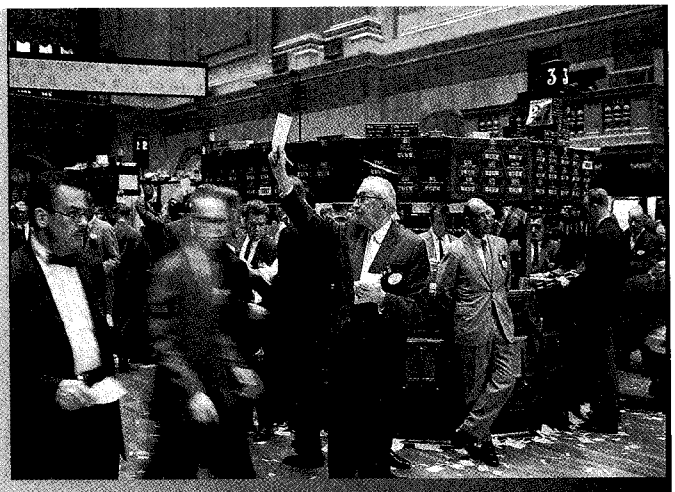

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George McCartney

Vincere
Written and directed by Marco Bellocchio ♦
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Winning Is Everything, Isn't It?

FEMINISTS began proclaiming that the personal is the political during those dreamy 70's of the last century. This, as I've noted elsewhere, is a proposition that every sane person must resist. Those who accept it invariably contaminate their relationships—especially intimate ones—with a lethal dose of powermongering. Of course, this obvious consequence of turning individuals into political operatives didn't deter the truly ideological feminists. More than anything else, they wanted to raise political questions within the precincts of the marriage state: Who's in charge *de facto*, and who's in charge *de jure*? They were on a campaign to stake their flag on the nuptial continent in order to rescue their male-colonized sisters regardless of whether they needed or wanted rescuing. In the process, they opened up a rich field of resentment to be tilled by spouses—both women and men—with real and imagined grievances. Of course, their ever-vigilant lawyers began staking claims of their own. When the primary nuptial concern is who has the power, you can forget about waiting until death do you part. Splitsville is no farther than the nearest courtroom.

Now consider the near inversion of the feminist proposition: The political can become the personal. It has infinitely more merit than its feminist obverse, for it is a salutary warning. Should you allow politics to invade your personal relations, you can expect trouble. Consider Hillary Clinton. What must her politicized personal life be like? *Eros* and politics make hideous bedfellows. But I'll say no more of our favorite Arkansas couple, for I have a more astonishing nuptial specimen to address in Marco Bellocchio's new film, *Vincere*, a compelling if not entirely reliable portrait of political power in action.

Bellocchio gives us a highly speculative account of Mussolini's rise to power as seen through the eyes of his mistress Ida Dalser, who claimed to be the dictator's wife and the mother of his son. Whatever the truth about Dalser, Bellocchio has made her a victim of politics and, thereby, an early feminist heroine.

The historical record indicates that Dalser began a relationship with Il Duce in 1914, when she was 34, and he 31. Thereafter, little is certain except that Dalser became an annoyance to the great man, so much so that his underlings, at his direction or on their own, sought to keep her away from him and out of the public eye—first, by virtual house arrest at her sister's home, and then, by institutionalizing her for mental instability. To complete their task, they had one of Mussolini's henchmen adopt her son, and he put the boy in boarding school out of Dalser's reach.

Bellocchio has made of his version of Dalser both a prism and a subject. Using her imagined treatment at the hands of the fascist, he has portrayed Mussolini as at once charismatic and vicious, a man willing to use his considerable personal magnetism to seduce those useful to him and then discard them when they became inconvenient. In this account, Dalser becomes a proxy for Italians, the clay Mussolini would mold into his vision of the way things should be—which, of course, was his way.

When Dalser first meets Mussolini on the eve of the Great War, he's a fiery socialist declaring his resistance to the capitalists and the nationalists he claims are driving all of Europe toward conflagration. He also roundly condemns the Roman Catholic Church for rendering ordinary people spinelessly obedient to the powers that be. At a political meeting in Milan, Dalser watches worshipfully as Mussolini demonstrates the folly of obedience to the *ancien régime*. When his turn to speak comes, he announces that he intends to challenge no less an authority than God Himself. He then gives the Almighty all of five minutes to strike him dead where he stands. If God doesn't take this opportunity to rid the world of Mussolini's magnificent impudence, his listeners will be forced to draw the obvious conclusion: The Old Guy doesn't exist. Once his audience's initial expression of outrage settles down, they watch in bemused silence as the minutes tick by. When Mussolini's pocket watch has measured off the fateful five, the God-challenger still stands. "Time's up; He doesn't exist," he concludes with a reassuring smile that not so subtly suggests that he's ready to take over for the divine absentee. Bellocchio returns to this scene at the end of his film as if to remind us that God's time rarely synchronizes with human time and, further, that tempting fate has a way of catching up with one, as Il Duce discovered. It's a bravura moment in a film filled with them,

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but I found myself wondering if Mussolini actually pulled this stunt. This is a film of defiantly outsized gestures, but it's also more than a little fanciful.

Filippo Timi plays the young Mussolini. With his gleaming coal-black eyes and serious mustache, he makes Il Duce a monster of self-regard. He's a man who is ready to do or say whatever is needed to advance his cause, which is no more and no less than the advancement of himself. He changes his politics as casually as he might change his socks. After he divested himself of his original pacific views, he came to regard war as a grand opportunity to reclaim Italy's ancient glory. We see him shouting down his former allies, who demand that Italy stay out of the war. This dramatization seems perfectly plausible. But Bellocchio oversteps the bounds of probability when he has Mussolini declare that "war is the health of the state." Unless he was a clairvoyant as well as a tyrant, it's unlikely he would have come up with the same apothegm, word for word, written a year later in an essay by the American radical Randolph Bourne. Not only is the chronology off; so is the intent. Bourne was being darkly ironic. His point was that the state often wages war unwarrantably to manipulate its population. Threatened by outside forces, people tend to become more tractable in the hopes that their cooperation with their leaders will fend off the enemy. It's the weapons-of-mass-destruction syndrome. That Bourne's jibe perfectly expresses Mussolini's strategy doesn't quite excuse Bellocchio's carelessness with facts.

As Dalser, the delicate-featured Giovanna Mezzogiorno hasn't the heavy chin and thick body of the real woman, but she is nevertheless impressive, whether robed or, as it often happens, not. Her infatuation with Mussolini is absolute. When he loses his reporter's position at the socialist newspaper *Avanti!*, she sells everything she has, including the beauty salon she had owned and run in Milan. She then awaits him, naked next to the pile of money she has raised. Did this happen, or is this Bellocchio's perfervid imagination at work once more? Their lovemaking is similarly fraught with questions. Did Mussolini really stare into the middle distance as if contemplating his glorious future while he performed conjugally with the adoring Ida underneath him, her eyes soulfully focused on her hero at work? Does it matter? Isn't it just one more operatic flourish in the cause of the greater truth? Here's the rub: Bellocchio clearly wants to dismantle Mussolini's recently rehabilitated reputation. He especially wants to indict him for manipulating the Italian masses. This being the case, wouldn't it have been better if he had not so brazenly tried to manipulate his own mass audience?

ONE OF THE BEST FEATURES of the film is its use of newsreels from the period. Once Mussolini leaves Dalser about a third of the way into the narrative, Timi disappears. In his place, we get the real Duce passing by in motorcades, making speeches from balconies and pacing about at his leisure, chin jutted, lip curled, and chest pumped. What a comic spectacle is the real thing! No one who has seen these newsreels can have avoided the question: How could such a clownish man have compelled fascistic allegiance from the usually individualistic, skeptical Italians? Could it be that the popularity of opera, with its over-the-top histrionics, had prepared Italy to take seriously such a grotesque hero? Whatever the case, the contrast between Timi and the real thing is startling. Timi is quite handsome, his refined features evident despite his scowling, glaring, and mustachioed impersonation of the young Mussolini. This may be deliberate. After all, Bellocchio wants us to be shocked by the disparity between personal and public personae. It's a way of emphasizing how the introduction of politics into personal life can distort, even maim, the individual. Certainly Dalser was maimed, and as dramatized, her suffering and anger are moving. Yet one cannot help wondering why she didn't acquiesce to the inevitable. The Leader was never going to do her right. Bellocchio seems to be saying that she was obsessed with the political component of her devotion. The political had so thoroughly colonized her personal life that she couldn't surrender hope for the power that she would have gained had Mussolini acknowledged her claims.

More affecting than Dalser's pain is that of her son, Benito. Here Bellocchio has made an interesting choice and created the best moments in the film. He's had Timi shave his young Mussolini mustache to play the son who was to die at 27 in a mental ward after what has been reported to be suspicious treatments. As Il Duce, Timi is somewhat monochromatic, because he is playing a driven, monomaniacal man whose default attitude is either staring or glaring beyond anyone around him as he contemplates the destiny that awaits him. But as the son, Timi presents us with an unnerving spectacle. In what has to be understood as a defensive tactic, young Benito takes to mocking his father's oratorical performances. As he and his friends listen to his father's broadcasts blaring from speakers positioned ubiquitously in parks and on promenades, he begins to imitate the old man, exaggerating but only slightly his inflections, his pauses, his head nodding. He even imitates the cheers of Il Duce's adoring crowds, opening his mouth as widely as possible and letting out a ghostly, hissing roar. It's an eerie, dismaying performance; his face is contorted so that we can't tell whether he is engaging in mockery or about to have a nervous breakdown. It's instructive that his friends stop paying attention after a minute or two, as if the spectacle is too much to bear—as, indeed, I found it myself. It's the perfect instance of the political dominating the personal. The result is horrible to behold. *Vincere* means "to win," but we're left to contemplate what's lost. ◆

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Taki Theodoracopulos

Animal Planet

LIKE THE SONGS TELL US, June is busting out all over, and love is in the air. Unlike humans, dolphins can never get enough of love. They are constantly nuzzling and staring into each other's eyes. And they are known to make love—up to 43 times in half an hour. That beats Tiger's record by a mile, and then some. Next time you ladies want to say something about sex addiction and your cheating boyfriends, think of the dolphins and give your boyfriends a pass.

Bonobos—a type of chimp and our closest living ancestor—are even more addicted than dolphins and Tiger Woods. They are always at it, lovemaking being a social currency, like a handshake or sharing a cup of tea. Just think of how many times a Frenchman shakes hands, multiply it by a hundred, and that's how a certain chimp spends his day. Yippee!

Giant pandas sing love songs when horny. They blurt out a variety of barks, moans, roars, growls, and squeals when looking for a hot date, which is quite normal when you think of it. Female pandas also use their own chirps and snorts to convey information about their age and temperament. Young male pandas prefer older females in order to mate. Experience trumps looks where pandas are concerned, something I wish the human race would adhere to right now.

Mind you, although I might sound desperate, I still wouldn't go so far as the male praying mantis, which gives up its life for a once-in-a-lifetime you-know-what. After a brief exchange of pleasantries, the predatory female starts to munch away at the male's head and continues on down the body. In the meantime the lower organ is working away despite the loss of the upper half. Just think of it. Even if you had Keira Knightley munching away at your head and shoulders, could you keep going? I love Keira, but even she's not worth the trouble. As with many men, the male mantis sacrifices its brain to the needs of down below. It reminds me of Bill Clinton, who almost lost his presidency over a very unattractive woman.

Which brings me to flirting with the opposite sex. If some of you think we men are clumsy, think again. A male elephant looking for sex has mucus oozing from his cheeks, and he gives off a smell that can be picked up half a mile away. It's enough to drive away even Paris Hilton, but the horny male elephant eventually does have his way with the female. A friend of mine who lives in Kenya had his car crushed by an elephant when the gentle beast got horny and mistook his Honda for a female. Male elephants become very aggressive when randy, just like some ethnic minorities I know.

THE GOOD NEWS I learned from the Discovery Channel is that size does not count. But it does help. The human male's genitalia are among the biggest in the animal kingdom. Hooray! Gorillas may be mighty, but they are endowed with one and a half inches. Boo! Lions do it a hundred times per day, but have only a little stump to work with. But let's not get too conceited about our size. The blue whale has an eight-footer, and I'd like to see any NBA star try to compete. Come to think of it, the blue whales are known for their modesty and for never showing off their large organ. Which proves yet again that if one is generously endowed one does not need to show off.

Howler monkeys French-kiss without touching, not a bad idea for our French cousins to follow in view of all the garlic they eat. The male and female howlers waggle their tongues at each other from a distance, then turn and face the sunset without doing any of the serious stuff that gets us all into trouble. It's romance at its best, but after a while both give in and go at it nonstop. But first they flirt, a rarity nowadays among us humans. And talk about flashers. Male fireflies advertise their desire to score with a flashing light. A chemical reaction in their bum sends a bright beacon to any females around. When a female firefly picks up the signal, she plays hard to get, and the hornier the male gets, the brighter his flash, like a bald Hollywood producer in heat. Still the female does not give in. The more flashing, the more she likes it. Like human females she forces the male to come up with the goods: the jet, the yacht, the limo, the cash. And then it happens, and the flashing stops. Moral of the story: The rich and flashy will always get lucky, but it's up to the female to make him work for it.

Study the animal kingdom and you're bound to pick up lots of tips about the female species. Last piece of advice: Try not to smell and drool like an elephant, and you'll be fine. ◆

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